CHARLEY ROSS
THE
KIDNAPPED CHILD

WALTER LEWIS ROSS.

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THE FATHER'S STORY

OF

CHARLEY ROSS,

THE

KIDNAPPED CHILD:

CONTAINING A

FULL AND COMPLETE ACCOUNT OF THE ABDUCTION OF

CHARLES BREWSTER ROSS

FROM THE HOME OF HIS PARENTS IN GERMANTOWN, WITH THE PURSUIT OF THE ABDUCTORS AND THEIR TRAGIC DEATH; THE VARIOUS INCIDENTS CONNECTED WITH THE SEARCH FOR THE LOST BOY; THE

DISCOVERY OF OTHER LOST CHILDREN,

Etc., Etc.

With Fac-Similes of Letters from the Abductors.

THE WHOLE CAREFULLY PREPARED FROM HIS OWN NOTES AND MEMORANDA, AND FROM INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM THE DETECTIVE POLICE AND OTHERS ENGAGED IN THE SEARCH,

By CHRISTIAN K. ROSS,

OF GERMANTOWN, (PHILADELPHIA).

With Portraits of Charley and his brother Walter, and of other Boys Mistaken for Charley; Views of his Parents' Home, Etc., Etc., Etc.

PHILADELPHIA:

JOHN E. POTTER AND COMPANY,

No. 617 SANSOM STREET.

Entered According to Act of Congress in the year 1876, by

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INTRODUCTION

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

THE world, from of old to our day, is full of stories of stolen children. They are stories of bereavements sharper than death. The sorrow of a fixed and finished calamity abates with time; the sorrow of suspense grows intenser the longer it endures. If healing be possible, to know the worst begins the healing. The death of a child, as it is one of the deepest of our human calamities, has connected with it some of God's sweetest solaces, under that law of mercy which tempers our life of mystery with its compensations. The stealing of a child involves all the sorrows of a child's death, without the relief of those hopes which first staunch the bleeding, and at last heal the wound. "Let me fall into the hand of the LORD," said David, "but let me not fall into the hand of man." The loss of a child by the hand of God is the child's sure gain, and may be made ours. He takes it to the infinite purity and absolute safety of His own presence; and, of the dead child now, we may say with a more assured trust what was said of a dead child in the gray twilight of the dawn of Revelation, "it is well with the child." The child that dies we may be with forever; one-half of a sad contingency vanishes as it passes away. The loss of a child by the hand of man involves treachery and cruelty, the despair of the family, the misery of the child, its rearing in crime and shame for ruin, or—

less wretched fate—its early death by neglect or violence.

Among the saddest of these touching stories, among the most deeply veiled of these mysteries, is the story and mystery of CHARLES BREWSTER ROSS. The story is already familiar in various degrees of fullness and accuracy to millions of sympathetic hearts. The vanished angel of the home, "the frolic and the gentle," has given to the firesides of Christendom a household name, and the children of continents whisper of their little lost brother in their play. It is a world-wide story, every detail of which has been eagerly sought, and in enlarging which unscrupulous invention has found its account. Yet now, for the first time, is it told with entire accuracy in all its details, by the hand which has proved itself the most competent to do it justice. It needs but a glance at the strange, mournful history, which lies in the hands of the reader, to see that love and grief have united with the hope long deferred, yet refusing utterly to die, and have given to the father in this pathetic chronicle, an inspiration which imparts to the book a wonderful power. It is a power which no merely literary skill or tact could have imparted to it. It is a people's book, simple, true to life—a book in which heart touches heart.

The writer of this Introduction has consented to prepare it, because, from the very inception of the work, he has had such personal and direct opportunities of knowing the purpose and spirit in which it has been prepared, as to justify him in expressing the conviction that it merits, in every respect, the cordial reception with which he is confident it will be greeted. It has been

written in part to meet a strong and general desire for a full and reliable statement of facts, which are so unique and full of intense interest, and many of which have been wholly unknown, or have been very incorrectly or inadequately brought before the public. But more than by this the father has been moved by the hope that the wide circulation of the book may help to elicit information which may yet clear up the darkness, and lead to the finding of the boy; and that it may aid in furnishing means, which will be sacredly devoted to prosecuting to the end, a search which will bring to suspense the rapture of a final joy, or the relief of a dreadful mystery dispelled. The reader will rejoice that Mr. Ross, contrary to his modest judgment of his own abilities, was induced, by the urgent representation of friends in whose judgment he confided, to prepare the work himself.

This book is a picture of contrasts—the lamb in the talons of the vulture—the innocence of childhood in the iron grasp of calculating murder—the hopes and yearnings of the loving, made vain by the savage purpose and fierce resolution of the cruel greed which thwarted them all—the black hand of conspiracy, broken at its lifting by the red hand of vengeance. It is part of the fashion of our time to consider crime on its romantic side. The Novel and the Drama have presented villainy in forms which hide its ugliness and loathsomeness under various masks of daring and skill, and even of chivalry and honor. This dangerous tendency has been met not only by the graver forms of protest and exposure, but fiction has been used to heal fiction. Great novelists have attempted to correct the evil by faithful representations of the unrelieved baseness, low-

ness, dullness and brutality which are the real marks of most in the criminal classes, who prey upon society, not with the bold savagery of the lion, but with the stealthy ferocity of the hyena. But these well-meant delineations of crime as it is, have never had any great practical force. Either they were too feeble to attract, too refined for the class they were meant to reach, or the glow of the genius of the writers threw the perilous charm of a morbid interest around the very wickedness they meant to condemn. "Catharine," is not read, and "Oliver Twist," is a doubtful book for the young. In this true story of CHARLEY ROSS, villainy is made to unmask itself. Nothing in fiction, since De Foe, approaches the realistic vividness of its pictures of the actual character of the villain. We see in it his coarseness, his prosaic baseness, his brutish greed, his dreary misery, his thwarted plan, his bloody death. He lives like a beast, and like a beast is killed as he prowls at night around the abodes of men.

The young will see how little there is in the real life of the bad, correspondent with the shams and lies with which the footlights and the sensational story invest the knaves, who dazzle and lure the young with examples of crime. In the letters, so faithfully reproduced in this volume, the criminals reveal their own character with an unmeant fidelity, in pictures to which not even the genius of a Shakespeare would be equal He could paint the thing with an unrivaled touch; but here is the unpainted thing itself—that naked, human character, which genius grows great in reflecting.

It needs but a little thoughtful pausing on the facts which this book presents, to realize how much the com-

munity owes to Mr. Ross for his earnest and persistent efforts to regain possession of his child, without acceding to the demands of the scoundrels who had stolen him. Had he recovered his boy by a facile compliance with their plans, the brilliant and easy success of so great a crime might have led to a repetition of the same sort of atrocious wickedness to a fearful extent. One such prize, so promptly drawn in such a lottery, would have awakened the cupidity and sharpened the cunning of that large class, who are always on the alert to discover new and hopeful openings for their unscrupulous villainy.

The vastness of our land, the inaccessible character of its recesses in mountain, forest, marsh and inlet, the ease of rapid passage, the absence of a passport system, and of other forms of restriction which embarrass the movements of criminals, would make it one of the most insecure parts of the world, if the idea should once fairly possess the mind of the criminal classes that the abduction of children could be made a remunerative method of obtaining money. There is not a home of happy and favored little ones in our land which is not more secure because of the utter failure of the wickedness which hoped to collect ransom by the abduction of Charley Ross. The men who did him such cruel wrong died by violence. The issue of all their cunning showed them to be miserable fools—thwarted, baffled, and crushed just as success seemed most near. Evading the officials of the law by wonderful adroitness, and making an accomplice of one of them, exposure and death met them when they supposed there was nothing to fear. The crime which became the occasion of their

death was urged upon them in part by the necessities which had grown out of the reluctance of Mr. Ross to compromise the demands of justice, by yielding at once to the suggestion of affection and compounding with crime. The result, as we see it now, has involved an awful loss to him—the loss of the darling of his home; but it is a loss which has made thousands of homes safer and happier. His boy, should he never be recovered, will be enrolled among the Innocents—the victims of cruelty in childhood, whose sufferings, because of their tender years, were knit up with blessings which came to others. Closest to Christ, children seem in large measure ordained "to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." A faithful Saviour will watch His martyrs. Wherever this little boy may be, he is not forgotten in the heart of infinite love; not unwatched by the eye that never sleeps. The hand that has spread the veil will lift it. God is reserving the sequel, but it will be worthy of Him. And in the hours —it may be the years—of suspense which are in reserve, the fervent prayers of many a Christian home for the desolate household will be mingled with the grateful recognition of the truth, that the father of this boy is entitled to a place among good men, whose fidelity to principle has made their sorrows fruitful for the welfare of mankind.

C. P. KRAUTH,
4004 Pine St., Phila.

July 11th, 1876.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

FROM a letter recently written to me by a gentleman of high social and political standing, residing in Germany, I make the following extract: "Your daily experience must be most remarkable since this great sorrow overtook you. The day will come when the public will demand, *in book form*, a complete history of this most extraordinary case. Such a book, containing all letters, testimony, photographs etc., etc., will be of never-failing interest, especially to the young. If the boy should be alive, in after years, a perusal of such a book might recall his early experience, and ultimately be the means of his restoration. We all know that stranger things have happened."

These kind and suggestive words express the same ideas that have been frequently advanced by many other persons who have asked whether, with a view to publication, I have preserved papers and kept memorandums of what was done in the case of the abduction of my little son, and of the search for him which has thus far been vain.

I little imagined, in the early period, the magnitude which this subject subsequently assumed, and therefore was not careful to keep a record of many things that occurred; but the most important events are so forcibly impressed on my mind, that, with the aid of those im-

mediately connected with me in the search, I will be able to recall most of the incidents.

It was not my purpose to prepare this history until some definite information had been obtained as to whether the child was living or dead. But on reflection I have thought the publication of the narrative at this time might assist in explaining the mystery which is still connected with the concealment of the child, or that possibly, through the perusal of the book, some one not familiar with the circumstances might be enabled to give a new and fortunate direction to the search, or perhaps that the child himself, seeing the illustrations of once familiar scenes, or learning from some incident herein related something to suggest early recollections, might be led to his home.

Another object in issuing the book now is that of obtaining the means to enable me to continue a search that cannot be abandoned until the child is found alive, or his death is certainly proven to us.

Scarcely a day passes even now without receiving information supposed to be in some way connected with the matter, or without hearing of suspicious persons who possibly could shed some light on the mystery, or of children in different parts of the country thought to be my little boy. To examine into everything brought to my notice gives me almost constant employment, and is attended with great expense of both time and money.

There is connected with the abduction, the search, the tragic death of the abductors, the finding of lost children, a great deal of interest which it is proper the public should know; and the simple facts as they occurred are grouped together in the narrative, with

regard to exactness rather than with any attempt at embellishment.

Other children have been lost and in some instances carried away, and not restored to their parents for long years, and sometimes have never been heard of; and the interest awakened in their behalf and that of their distressed parents has been confined to their immediate friends and acquaintances. In the present instance, however, the motive actuating the kidnappers, and the terrible threats made through anonymous letters, aroused the indignation of every one against the criminals who had so cruelly taken an innocent child, and placed his life in jeopardy to procure a ransom from the parents they had so inhumanly robbed.

The public interest which has been so universally manifested since the abduction of my little son, and which ever and anon shows itself whenever a rumor is circulated appearing to relate, however remotely, to the dark secret, is due to the fact that a new crime was attempted to be inaugurated in our country, and to the insecurity felt by every family for their own children, lest they should meet a loss similar to that which has befallen our own. The feeling is everywhere spread over our own country; it has extended to Europe and to South America, as shown in the many letters received; and as I am credibly informed, has reached the furthermost parts of Asia. Kidnapping a child for the purpose of extorting money for his release, and holding his life contingent on the payment of the ransom, is so atrocious a crime that no apprehensions were felt that it would ever be perpetrated among us. No laws are found in the books of any State which anticipated the commis-

sion of so unnatural an offense, nor was any punishment provided commensurate with its heinousness. The Legislatures of a few States however have, since its commission, taken action on the matter, and passed acts defining the crime, and affixing severe penalties for its perpetration hereafter.

A ransom is a sum of money fixed by the kidnappers, and hence is entirely different from a reward offered by a parent or a friend for the return of the stolen one. In the one case the sufferer has no choice, but must accede to the demands of the villains or accept the consequences. In the other he makes a voluntary offer for the return of the child.

When it became known to the public that the object of the kidnappers in stealing the child was to exact a large sum of money from the parents before giving him up, a thrill of horror ran through the nation, and popular sentiment demanded the immediate stamping out of this species of crime, by securing the arrest and by administering summary and fitting punishment to the heartless criminals. Fully appreciating the danger which might result to society should the brigands prove successful in their first infamous experiment, the case was placed in the hands of the police authorities of the city to work up as was deemed best, with the understanding that I would never consent to compound the crime, preferring to wait and suffer in the hope of securing the criminals with the child. The terrible anguish caused by this long suspense, to which the knowledge of the child's death would be a relief, it is impossible to describe.

Our fears, hopes and aims have centered for the past

two years upon the recovery of CHARLEY, and unraveling the mystery connected with his long concealment. Forgetting all other troubles and laying aside all other cares, our time, energies and means have been devoted to these objects, and we should be an unfaithful and unnatural parent, did we relinquish the search without arriving at a satisfactory solution of the whole matter.

The successful abduction and continued concealment of the unfortunate child have caused the name of CHARLEY ROSS to be known in almost every household; and in a measure he has become the child of the people. Many prayers have been offered up for his restoration, and many homes would be glad to know that he has been recovered.

A recent article in the *Mothers' Magazine* forcibly demonstrates this feeling, and by permission of the author I avail myself of an extract from it.

"Events of startling moment have been crowded into the past two years—revolutions, revulsions, catastrophes, crimes and disorders, for which, in general, men must be held accountable, while some are seemingly due to what we denominate chance or accident. Of them, all the larger part are now looked at with that indifference which belongs to things bygone, retaining only a slight hold on public attention; and many of them, in the rush of present affairs or newer emergencies, are well nigh buried in oblivion. The edge of sharp surprises soon wears off. Those who have been for a while stunned, when they are able to go about their business forget the blow. Partial calamities, of whatever sort, do not long trouble those untouched by them. If severe or of wide extent, recu-

peration may be speedy; but if past remedy, they are acquiesced in. Yet, while matters lately regarded as of prime importance are scarcely referred to, and multitudes of those which loomed up largely have shrunken out of sight, the fate and whereabouts of a child four years of age, continue to awaken an absorbing and universal anxiety.

"The name of CHARLEY ROSS is familiar to every-household. His form, his pretty features, his curling locks, his winsome expression, known to us by pictures and photographs, would be recognized at a glance if he could anywhere be met outside of his secret hiding place—the little absent pet, for whom so many prayers continually ascend.

"What mother's heart is not touched? What parent does not feel almost as though the sorrow were his own? And what citizen is not affrighted at such a precedent of new and heinous outrage, and the inefficiency of laws?

"A profound and painful mystery attaches to this case of cruel abduction, from whatever stand-point it is looked at, whether as to the instrumentalities of men or a providence of God. That this, with other dark and hidden things, will one day be brought to light, and in the overrulings of Almighty God, some merciful designs of His be traced through all the web and woof of sinister devices, we fondly hope and certainly believe. The act itself may well be called a 'mystery of iniquity' transcending, if possible, in peculiar baseness, in cold and calculating villainy, the very highest types of crime.

"We have been wont to think that there is in the

most abandoned natures some human feeling, some capability of remorse, of being touched by an appealing pity.

"These men had no bowels of mercy; in them the eclipse of goodness was complete, their depravity black as Egyptian night, and total. Dragging their innocent prey from his own sweet home into their polluted den, they contrived how to guard themselves at every point, and traffic on parental anguish. Almost preferable were it, within our civilized bounds, to have wild beasts again at large, against which the arts and wiles of men can defend themselves, rather than savage beasts in human shape, setting at naught their pursurers. Few criminal secrets are so inscrutable as to bid defiance to well-directed and resolute researches. Murder it has been truly said, "will out," and by the corrosive nature of guilt gnaws its own way to open exposure. The spoils of the robber are from time to time unearthed, and restitution is made; while this looks like the very triumph of wickedness, as the most precious of all stolen treasures remains hidden, and the lost is not found.

"The police of cities, the ingenious plans of experts and detectives in every quarter, the stimulus of large rewards—all these, combined with a keen sympathy which has put all the humane on the alert, have so far resulted only in disappointment, and in hope deferred.

"Is the fate of CHARLEY ROSS to be despaired of? Not by the help of God, if every parent who loves his child, if the whole motherhood everywhere, is silently pledged to join in and renew the search."

CHAPTER I.

THE ABDUCTION.

NEARLY two years have passed away since my two children were taken from Germantown, Pa., in which place they were both born, and where I have resided about ten years. Germantown is a suburb of Philadelphia and within its corporate limits.

My residence is on East Washington Lane, about seven miles from the centre of the city. The Lane begins at Main Street and runs in a north-easterly direction. The distance from the main street to the Chestnut Hill R. R. station is about half a mile.

On both sides of the Lane, between these two points, are a number of very handsome residences, all set back some distance from the roadway, and having well-kept lawns in front, planted with trees and shrubbery. The houses have from one to ten acres of ground attached to them, and all have kitchens, gardens and stables in the rear.

My house is on the north side of the lane, the eighth from the Main street, and the second from the Chestnut Hill R. R. station; it is a double house built of stone, two stories in height, and surmounted by a cupola; it has back buildings, and a piazza built upon three of its sides.

It stands on rising ground, about fifty feet from the road; the lawn is ornamented with evergreens and other trees. Between this house and the nearest one

on the west is an unoccupied field of about three acres in extent; in this field along the line of the road are a large number of trees and small bushes, which grow very close together and completely shut out the view of the road from any one looking diagonally in that direction, either from my house or from that of my neighbors on the other side of the field. It was between these two houses and opposite the open field, that the abductors carried on their conversation with the children when they enticed them into the wagon.

On Friday, June 26th, 1874, my two eldest children, Stoughton and Harry, left their home early in the morning to spend their summer vacation with their grandmother in Middletown, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania.

On the same day my wife, being out of health, went with our eldest daughter, Sophia, to Atlantic City, intending to remain several weeks. Before leaving home she said to Walter and CHARLEY that at the end of two weeks she would send Sophia home, and they should come down to her. This proposed visit to the seashore was looked forward to, by both the boys, with much pleasure; and in two of the letters from the abductors, CHARLEY is represented as fretting lest he should not get home in time to join his mother at Atlantic City.

The members of the family remaining at home were, in addition to myself, Walter Lewis, CHARLES BREWSTER, Marian Kimball and Annie Christine Ross, our youngest child, Bridget and Sarah Kerr, who took care of the children, Mary, the cook, and Thomas Foley, gardener.

On Saturday, June 27th, about half past four o'clock in the afternoon, while sitting alone in the nursery, Walter came up to me and said that a man in a wagon had given CHARLEY and himself some candy. The piece he had in his hands was white and plaited, about four inches long. Walter said CHARLEY did not want his just then, and that he was keeping it for him.

I asked him if he knew who the man was, and if he had asked for the candy. He replied "No sir," and then went away, cautioned by me not to ask strangers for anything. The only thought that occurred to me about the matter was, that some one fond of children had, as an act of kindness, given the candy to the boys, and the impression on my mind was rather a pleasant one.

I heard no more of the man who had given them candy, and nothing unusual occurred that I was aware of until Wednesday evening, July 1st. On the morning of that day the children asked me for money to buy fire-crackers for the Fourth of July. I told them I would get some for them, and be with them on the 4th; that I was afraid they would set fire to the house or stable if alone. Their minds seemed set on having them at once, and to please them I told them I would send home a cart load of sea-shore sand in which they could play on the Fourth of July, and they could fire their crackers in it. In order to fulfil my promise to the children, I came to Germantown on July 1st earlier than usual, bought the sand, and got home before six o'clock.

Not seeing the little boys, I inquired of one of the servants where they were, and was told that since their

bath, they had been playing on the sidewalk in front of the house, with the children of Mr. McDowell, our nearest neighbor. I went to the gate, but could not see them; thinking, however, that they must be somewhere in the neighborhood, I felt no uneasiness until tea-time, when I again looked and called for them; but not being able to see them, and getting no response, I sent to look for them, but they were not to be found. I now became very anxious, and sent the girls to every house in the neighborhood where they might chance to be, and finally started myself in a different direction to look for them. But I was not successful in learning anything of the boys, and was returning to the house, not a little worried, but believing there was still no serious cause for alarm, when as I was passing Mrs. Kidder's house—on the other side of the unoccupied field referred to—Miss Mary Kidder called to me and asked whether I supposed the boys would be likely to take a ride with strangers. I replied that they would be very likely to do so if asked. She then said she believed Walter and CHARLEY had gone away with two men in a wagon; for she heard them talking to some men beyond the bushes, and next saw them pass her house in a wagon with two men.

This intelligence greatly alarmed me, and when I reached home, finding that the children had not returned, I started immediately for the Police Station in the Town Hall, for the purpose of telegraphing to the Central Office in the city, to inquire whether they had been brought into any of the Station-houses. Mr. Walter Kidder joined me, and before we arrived at the top of the hill on our way towards the Main street, we saw

Walter in charge of a man coming toward us. This was about eight o'clock in the evening.

When we joined them, I asked Walter where he had been. The child was so much frightened that he could not reply. Mr. Peacock, with whom he was, answered for him, that he had found him in Kensington, one of the northern districts of Philadelphia, on the corner of Palmer and Richmond streets.

I then asked Walter where CHARLEY was. He answered, "Why, he is all right; he is in the wagon," supposing that he himself was the lost one, and not doubting that CHARLEY would be brought back. Mr. Peacock then said that Walter had not spoken anything about his brother on his way home.

The case had now assumed a very serious aspect, and I was utterly at a loss to know what to do. That CHARLEY was lost was certain. Every effort to find him, with as little delay as possible, was my first duty.

Sending Walter home, Mr. Kidder and I hastened on to the Police Telegraph Office, and sent a message to Philadelphia, inquiring whether a child of CHARLEY'S description (briefly giving it) had been brought to any of the District Station-houses. In about half an hour a reply was received, that no such child had been found.

We now turned toward home, after being instructed to inquire for Captain Heins at the Central Police Station in Philadelphia. On my way to the station I stopped at the house of Mr. Joseph W. Lewis, my wife's brother, and told the family where I was going and what my errand was. My nephew, Frank D. Lewis, volunteered to go with me.

It was nearly eleven o'clock when we reached the Central Police Station at Fifth and Chestnut streets. Capt. Heins had just gone home, and Detective Joyce was in charge of the office for the night. We told our story to Mr. Joyce, who replied that it seemed to him like a drunken frolic, and that the men would either take CHARLEY home, or put him out of the wagon where he would be picked up by some of the patrolmen during the night.

This theory was not satisfactory to us, and we determined to go directly to Kensington. First we went to the District Station-house nearest the spot where Walter was found, and made inquiry of the officers on duty. They however had seen nothing of CHARLEY, and had heard nothing of the loss of the children. Our next inquiry was for Mr. Peacock's residence in Euston Street. Arousing him, we asked if he had heard anything of CHARLEY; (I had requested him to make inquiry for the missing boy after he got home from Germantown.) He said he had learned nothing, and directed us to the corner where Walter had been put out of the wagon.

After walking about the district several hours, inquiring at many points and failing to get any information, we concluded to return home. It was now about three o'clock in the morning. The street cars had ceased running, and we were unable to get any one at the livery stables to send us home, or even believe our story. There seemed no alternative but to walk; the distance is about six miles. Soon we reached Germantown Avenue, the most direct road to our homes; and after walking about a mile, we fortunately found a

livery stable open, and procured conveyance to Germantown.

It was nearly five o'clock in the morning of July 2d when we reached Washington Lane. Nothing had there been learned of the object of our search. I slept none, had no appetite, was unnerved, and anything but fitted for the day's work that was before me.

At about half past seven o'clock I awakened Walter, and refrained from saying anything to him about his adventure of the preceding day until he had his breakfast. He was pale and nervous, not having wholly recovered from his fright. I took him to his Uncle Joseph Lewis's house, where he was thoroughly questioned on the matter of the carrying away of himself and his brother CHARLEY.

The story that Walter told was, that two men driving on the Lane in a buggy had given him and his brother CHARLEY candy on Saturday, June 27th; Monday, June 29th; Tuesday, June 30th; and Wednesday, July 1st; and that CHARLEY had asked them for a ride, and also whether they would not buy him fire-crackers, which they promised to do. After driving to the top of the hill, they turned around and took them into the wagon. Walter asked them to go to the Main street to get the fire-crackers. To this request the men said "No; we will take you to Aunt Susie's, (a fictitious person), who keeps a store, and will give you a pocket-full for five cents." He said CHARLEY was placed on the seat between the men, and he sat on the knee of the one who was not driving. He also said that the men talked to them as they drove along, but said more to CHARLEY than to him; that they did not

talk much to each other; about all he remembered their saying, was that the one on whose knee he sat took off his hat, and showing it to his companion remarked that it was about worn out, and he would have to get another one. This man also said to the driver "Slower, slower," or "Faster, faster," as they were ascending or descending a hill. The men gave them candy as they went along.

After they had gone some distance, CHARLEY began to cry, and begged to be taken home; he was pacified by being told they would soon be at Aunt Susie's. On reaching Palmer and Richmond streets, Walter was given twenty-five cents, and directed to a cigar store next to the corner, where fire-works were displayed in the window, and told to get fire-crackers for himself, and torpedoes for CHARLEY. When he reached home he had two packages of fire-crackers and one package of small torpedoes in his hands, and four cents in change in his pocket. While Walter was in the store buying the crackers and torpedoes, the men drove off, taking CHARLEY with them; and when he came out he looked up and down the street and around the corner, but could see nothing of the horse and wagon, the men, or his little brother. Finding himself deserted, he cried loudly; a crowd soon gathered around him, and one of the number was Mr. Henry G. Peacock, who brought him home.

Walter's story of this part of the transaction was confirmed by a little girl who saw the men give him the money and direct him to the cigar store. She also saw them drive up Palmer street to the first small street and turn the corner, and disappear in an

THE HOME OF CHARLEY ROSS.

easterly direction, before Walter returned. She was the first person who attempted to pacify him when he began to cry. Walter amongst other things stated that the men had a bottle on the seat of the wagon, and that at two different places they put him out of the wagon to get some water; when he handed them the cup, they poured some liquor into the water and drank.

After concluding our examination of the boy on these points, we asked him what kind of looking men they were? The driver he described as being of medium size, about my height (five feet nine inches), rather full and red in the face, with red or sandy mustache, and no beard; he wore eye-glasses, and had an open-faced gold watch, gold vest chain and green sleeve buttons.

The other man was older, taller and heavier than the driver. He had whiskers about three inches long, of a red or sandy color, and a nose which was turned up or in some way deformed; he wore gold-bowed spectacles, and two gold rings on one of his middle fingers—one plain, the other set with a red stone.

The horse was of a medium size, of a dark bay or brown color, with a white mark on his forehead. The harness was old, and the silver plating of the mountings pretty well worn off.

The wagon was a rather old falling-top buggy, painted a dark color, with red stripes on the wheels, and lined with blue cloth. There were two lap covers, one torn and dirty.

At the time of the abduction Walter was nearly six years old—having been born Oct. 12th, 1868. He was of rather slight build, had light brown hair. CHARLEY was born May 4th, 1870, and was about four years and two

months old when he was stolen. His body and limbs were straight and well-formed; his face round and full; his chin small, with a noticeable dimple; his hands very regular and prettily dimpled; small, well-formed neck; full, broad forehead; bright, dark brown eyes, with considerable fullness over them; clear, white skin; healthy complexion; light flaxen hair of a silky texture, easily curled in ringlets when extending to the neck; hair darker at the roots, a slight cowlick on the left side when it was parted; very light eyebrows. He talked plainly, but was shy and retiring, and had a habit of putting his arm up to his eyes when approached by strangers. He had no marks upon his person, except those of vaccination.

CHARLEY was a depending, confiding child, and very sensitive; a word spoken harshly to him would cause his eyes to fill, and the tears to slowly trickle down his cheeks. He rarely cried aloud, and as soon as any evidence of forgiveness was manifested, was quick to perceive it, and would hasten to be caressed. In consequence of his confiding disposition, he was the favorite of his older brothers; and nothing would please them more than to get the consent of their mother to allow CHARLEY to sleep with them. Anything they could do to please him, was readily, cheerfully and lovingly done. He seemed to know and feel that as soon as they returned from school, they would gladly join with him in any play he desired; and generally he was on the lookout for them, when the hour for their return approached.

He had a good constitution, and when taken away was full of flesh and in good health—never having been sick after he was six months old.

Having obtained from my son Walter all he could tell, my nephew and I drove to the Central Police Office in the city, and inquired if there was any news of the missing child. Nothing had been heard of him. Detective Wood and several other officers of this branch of the police department were then informed of all we knew concerning the taking away of the children, the return of Walter, and the continued absence of CHARLEY, together with all the facts which we had obtained from Walter. Their impressions were that the men had taken the children while under the influence of liquor, and after regaining their senses, were alarmed at what they had done, and were afraid to take CHARLEY home, but would turn him adrift during the day. They advised us to go to Kensington and make inquiry for him. Officer Joyce volunteered to assist us in the search. Permission was granted Mr. Peacock by his employers to accompany us.

Our first inquiry was at the District Station-house where we had inquired the previous night. We were informed there that nothing had been reported by the night patrol, and instructions had been given to the day officers to keep a lookout for the child.

Inquiry was then made of the people residing in the neighborhood of Palmer and Richmond streets, to find a trace if possible of the men, the horse and wagon, and of the direction they went after leaving Walter out of the wagon; but no one was found who had seen them, except the little girl before mentioned, who saw Walter leave the wagon.

The proprietor of the store recollected that a boy had bought fire-crackers and torpedoes the previous

afternoon; but supposing him to be a child belonging in the neighborhood, had not observed him particularly, and did not see the horse and wagon with the occupants. Officer Joyce made inquiries of the ferry master at Shackamaxon Street; but he did not recollect seeing the described party passing through the gates of the ferry.

Baffled in all our efforts to gain information where we supposed we should certainly discover something that would aid us in tracing the child, we left Mr. Peacock with several police officers to continue the search through the district, and determined to drive home over the route usually taken in going from Kensington to Washington Lane, making inquiries at livery stables, feed stores, taverns and watering places, wherever we supposed persons might have been congregated who would be likely to observe vehicles passing, or wherever there was a probability of a horse and wagon being hired. This we did, and found no one who had seen the men and children, or had hired out a horse and wagon of the description on any of the days upon which the men were on Washington Lane. We then concluded that the abductors had taken a different route, and resolved after we arrived home to get a fresh horse, and take Walter with us to point out the roads and streets the men had driven over the day before.

With Walter as our guide, we started from Washington Lane about three o'clock the same afternoon, telling him to point out to us the road taken by the men on the previous day. Following his directions, we went up Washington Lane to Limekiln Turnpike, along the pike to a small street leading to Church Lane, down

Church Lane to Hancock Street, down Hancock Street to Shoemaker Lane, thence to Wakefield Street, thence to Fisher's Lane, thence to Broad Street, thence to Cayuga Street (a small street north of the Reading Railroad Bridge), thence to Old York Road, thence to Germantown Avenue, thence to Lehigh Avenue, thence to Second Street, thence to Thompson Street, thence to Frankford Road, thence to Girard Avenue, thence to Shackamaxon Street, thence to Richmond Street, thence to Palmer Street, and North along Palmer Street to the place where Walter was left by the abductors.

The route was a tortuous one, evidently selected for the purpose of baffling, the abductors never supposing that a child of Walter's age would be able to remember all its twistings and turnings. He showed great powers of observation, and although he knew the names of no streets or roads after leaving the Limekiln Turnpike, yet he had certain landmarks fixed in his mind, which he recognized immediately, and directed our course without a mistake. We tested his memory at more than one point, but found him always correct. Several more prominent objects, as a pump at which the men stopped to get a drink, the different bridges, and the Kensington Water Works, were named and described before they were in sight. The correctness of the route was further verified by the statement of different parties of men who were working on the road, who told us that a little while before six o'clock on July 1st they had seen the wagon, with the two men and children in it, pass by. The route was about eight miles in length, and that Walter should have remembered it so accurately was very remarkable, as he had

never been over it before. We asked him how he knew the names of the places, bridges, etc. He replied that he had inquired of the men as they passed them.

While driving along, Walter said that the man on whose knee he sat had remarked that he was a farmer, and owned a lot of ground which we would soon reach, and when we approached it he pointed it out to us. We inquired at the adjoining house for the owner. His name was given, with the information that he was not at home. The person of whom we were making inquiries could not say where he was, but said he had been to ride July 1st, and did not return until the morning of the 2d. When pressed very closely where he could be found, we were told, probably at a tavern not far distant, as he had been absent for several days. Now we concluded we certainly had some information of value, as circumstances looked suspicious, and accorded with the theory that the abduction had been accomplished during a drunken frolic. On reaching the tavern, a boy told us we would find the object of our search in a shed, pointing to a building which proved to be a cow-shed. My nephew finding him led him to the wagon, and asked Walter if he had ever seen the man before. He replied, no. After questioning him as to where he had been, and his answers being confirmed by the boy and a man who were in attendance at the place, we were satisfied that he was not guilty of taking the children. (We tried to explain to him why he had been disturbed; but he seemed not to realize what was said, and regarded it rather as a joke.)

Disappointed in our first day's efforts to discover any-

thing, either along the route traveled by the abductors, or in the neighborhood where the elder of the two boys had been abandoned, shortly after five o'clock we drove to the Central Station, and nothing having been heard there, we prepared the first advertisement, which appeared in the *Public Ledger* of the 3d of July, as follows:

Lost, on the first instant, a small boy about four years of age, light complexion, and light curly hair. A suitable reward will be paid on his return to E. L. Joyce, Central Station, corner of 5th and Chestnut streets.

The reason for using officer Joyce's name instead of my own in the advertisement was to conceal the loss from Mrs. Ross; for I hoped that the child would be recovered before she would hear of his having been taken away. Before leaving the Central Station for home, arrangements were made to telegraph me in case any intelligence was obtained. A storm soon came up; we stabled our horse, and returned home on the seven o'clock train.

By this time the news of the loss became known to many of my neighbors and friends, and during the evening a number called at my house and expressed their warmest sympathy, and endeavored to encourage me with the hope that the child would certainly be restored as soon as the advertisement appeared. Their opinions seemed to be that he had been retained with the expectation of seeing a reward offered for restoring him. Many persons offered their services, if required, in any way I might suggest. Their judgment and kind expressions of sympathy encouraged me with the hope that the following day would be more favorable in its results than the preceding one had been.

On the morning of July 3d, my nephew and I called to see Mr. Samuel Johnson, who had been reported by one of my visitors on the previous evening as having seen the men give the children candy. Mr. Johnson's description of the horse and wagon agreed in all essential points with that of Walter. The men impressed him with the idea that they were farmers; but he was not near enough to distinguish their features.

We went immediately from Mr. Johnson to the Central Station, where we saw Mayor Stokely, District Attorney Wm. B. Mann, Chief of Police Jones, Alderman Carpenter and Captain Heins, with a number of detectives, and again related all that was known of the abduction of the children, with a description of the horse and wagon and men, as given by Mr. Johnson and Walter, together with the route that was taken to reach the corner of Palmer and Richmond streets.

While I was conversing with the Mayor and others, the Chief of Police requested my nephew to state to the Lieutenants of Police of the various Districts everything he knew about the matter. Shortly after I was called in, and asked if I had any suggestion to offer. I replied that I thought a diligent search for the horse and wagon should be made, as I believed that if they could be traced the mystery would be cleared up. Chief Jones immediately instructed the Lieutenants to detail a sufficient number of men in citizen's dress in each district to visit and examine every livery stable, blacksmith shop, and all other places where there was a possibility of the horse being hired or kept, and to direct all their respective officers at the next roll-call to keep a strict watch on all suspicious persons, as well as to make inquiries for the child.

WASHINGTON LANE, GERMANTOWN, FROM WHICH CHARLEY WAS STOLEN.

I was then subjected to a close questioning by the detectives, to find out if possible what motive could have prompted the act. Inquiry was directed to the following, beside many other points:

First, Were there any difficulties in my family relations? To this I unhesitatingly answered, none whatever. Second, What servants were now in my employ? I gave the names, and related, so far as I was able, how they were obtained, and expressed my belief they were not in the conspiracy. Third, What servants, male and female, had been discharged from my employ? The names were given, and they were subsequently traced. (The detectives, after a thorough investigation, were satisfied that they were not implicated in the matter.) Fourth, Did I suppose that any of my creditors would be likely to do an act of this kind? To this query I emphatically replied in the negative. Fifth, Had I ever had a disagreement with any one, which would likely cause such an act to be done out of revengeful motives? I declared that I bore no ill-will to any living person, and certainly knew of no one who had any enmity against me, for I had never given cause for any such feeling. Sixth, Had I served on a jury that had convicted any one of crime? I answered, on one case years ago. (The person so convicted was hunted up and cleared himself of any complicity in the case.)

The detectives declared there *must* have been some motive for the act, and were utterly at a loss to even surmise what it could be. I said I was at as great a loss as they possibly could be; that since the occurrence I had thought the matter over in all its bearings,

and was unable to divine any reason why my child should have been stolen.

After some further conversation, it was suggested by Officer Joyce that I would get an anonymous letter before many days, revealing something in relation to the mystery. This was merely a guess on his part; but it proved to be a shrewd one, and the correctness of his surmise was demonstrated shortly after.

In the afternoon Detectives Wood and Joyce, with my brother Joseph, went over the route, taking Walter for their guide. On returning, they expressed their astonishment at the boy's wonderful memory of localities, in which all the officers concurred. They again questioned the ferry master at Shackamaxon street about the party crossing the river; but he remained firm in the belief that they did not go over the river at that ferry. In the meantime I remained at the Central Station in conference with the detectives, especially with Capt. Heins, who plied me with questions, endeavoring to find a motive for the abduction.

During the afternoon information was received through Frances Ducassés, a man in the employ of Mr. A. H. DeHaven, that a band of gipsies, who had been encamped not far from Washington Lane, had broken camp, and were then passing down Germantown Avenue. Persons along the route over which these people had traveled, stated that in one of their wagons was a child who was crying bitterly, and who they suspected did not belong to them. Measures were immediately taken to institute a search for them. Instructions were telegraphed to all the Police Stations for the officers to inquire the route taken by the gipsies, and to report to

the Central Station. About ten o'clock at night it was reported from the Sixteenth District that a party of gipsies were about encamping in a wood in the vicinity of Fifty-fifth and Walnut streets.

On receipt of this intelligence, three officers with my brother Joseph (to identify the child if found) left the Central Office for the Sixteenth District Station-house. The Lieutenant of the Sixteenth Police District joined in the search for the gipsies, who, after considerable trouble, (for the night was very dark,) were found encamped in a secluded spot. The party consisted of two men and several women, some of whom were quite young. They had with them a number of fine horses and two wagons. The men had been fighting, and one of them was badly cut in the face. As soon as the officers reached the spot, one of the men loudly protested against being molested, and threatened to shoot any one who should attempt to disturb his party; but he was soon convinced that the intruders in his camp were not to be trifled with. On being questioned, he admitted that they had passed down Germantown Avenue during the afternoon, but declared that they had no small child with them. Notwithstanding his assertion, without further delay, a thorough search was begun. The contents of the wagons were overhauled, chests were opened, and their contents taken out to see if any children's clothing was in them. Neither child nor children's clothing was found; but the officers found a lot of stuff, such as laces, watches and pistols, which were in all probability not legitimately obtained. The two men were taken to the Station-house and detained until morning; and nothing being discovered to connect

them with the stealing of the child, they were discharged.

My nephew and I remained at the Central Station anxiously awaiting news from the searching party. Part of the time we spent in writing the second advertisment, offering a reward of three hundred dollars for the return of the child—having made arrangements with Mr. Rufus Walborn to have CHARLEY brought to his place of business, No. 5 North 6th street, in the event of the person who had stolen or found the child bringing him to claim the reward. This advertisement was put in as many papers as possible; but owing to the lateness of the hour, some had gone to press, and we were not able to have it inserted in all that appeared on the following morning, the 4th of July.

$300 reward will be paid to the person returning to No. 5 North Sixth street, a small boy, four years old, having long, curly flaxen hair, hazel eyes, clear, light skin and round face, dressed in a brown linen suit, with short skirt, broad-brimmed straw hat and laced shoes. This child was lost from Germantown on Wednesday afternoon (1st instant) between four and five o'clock.

My name was not put to this advertisement, for the same reason that it did not appear in the first one; viz., because I did not wish Mrs. Ross to know that the child was lost.

About three o'clock on the morning of the 4th of July, we went to get our horse with the intention of driving home, but were unable to arouse any one at the stable, and were compelled to return to the Station-house, and passed the remainder of the night in talking over the mystery connected with the loss of CHARLEY. About four o'clock my nephew was persuaded to go home,

while I remained in the city, to be on hand in the event of any one appearing at an early hour with the child, at No. 5 North 6th street.

Up to this time it was thought by all that some one might have picked up the boy, and was waiting to see a reward offered before returning him. No one had any idea at this time of the real nature of the abduction, and no one was prepared for the startling revelations which were soon afterwards made by the abductors.

NURSERY IN CHARLEY'S HOME.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST LETTER FROM THE ABDUCTORS, AND BEGINNING OF THE SEARCH BY THE POLICE.

AFTER awaiting the result of my advertisement at No. 5 North Sixth Street from an early hour of the morning of the 4th of July until about nine o'clock, I returned to the Central Police Office dispirited and disappointed. Scarcely had I reached there when my brother Joseph came hurriedly into the room, in a state of excitement fully warranted by the missive he bore, exclaiming, "I have it! I have it!" He held in his hand a letter partially opened, which he passed to me. Upon the envelope was written, in a hand ever afterward distinguishable at a glance, my full name and address. Its postmark was Philadelphia, July the 3d, eight A. M.

In a moment all present eagerly gathered around me, whilst I deciphered the terrible communication. Captain Heins took possession of the letter as soon as I had read it, and invited me, with a few of my friends and several detective officers, into a private room. The letter was then read aloud. So overwhelming was the astonishment and indignation that for a time every one was silent. Then followed varied expressions of horror, as each one realized that there existed a human being capable of committing an act so cruel, so full of unspeakable torment to its victims, as that of child-

stealing. The disguised writing, the evident effort at bad spelling, the absence of any signature, and the revelation of the fact that my child had been taken away for money, indicated that the wretch who designed the plot had carefully prepared to guard himself and his vile accomplices from detection. The officers were of the opinion that the abductors could not withhold or conceal the child many days.

The first shock over, my own feelings were those of relief. The suspense of the past three days and nights, utterly blank and fruitless as they had been, yielding no ray of light upon the fate of the child or the motive for his taking away, was intolerable. It is affirmed by persons who have been rescued from drowning that, in the brief moment before loss of consciousness, as if by a preternatural quickening of memory, every long-forgotten action of their lives vividly passed before their minds. So it seemed to me that in these three days my imagination had conjured every possible as well as impossible cause of my son's absence. Added to this was the torment caused by the suspicion vaguely hinted, and here and there directly implied in the questioning to which I was subjected, that either myself or persons closely connected with me were concerned in concealing the child. With this oppressive weight on my mind, a sense of relief was felt on receiving the first information that CHARLEY was alive, and that there was some hope that he would soon be safe at home.

I was convinced that the writer of the letter had possession of CHARLEY, not only because he declared it; but more surely from the fact that he gave correctly CHARLEY'S middle name "Brewster," a name by which

he was rarely called, but which was known to Walter, and was elicited from him during the drive to the city.

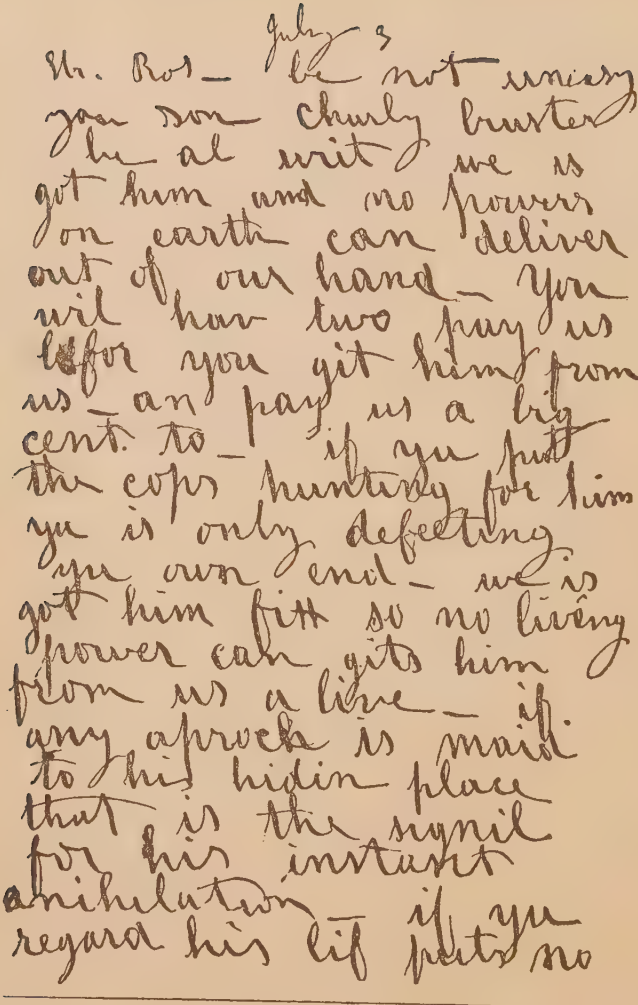
Believing that a fac simile of this, as well as several other letters, will be of interest, they are inserted in the order in which they were received, and closely following the printed text.

[No. 1.]

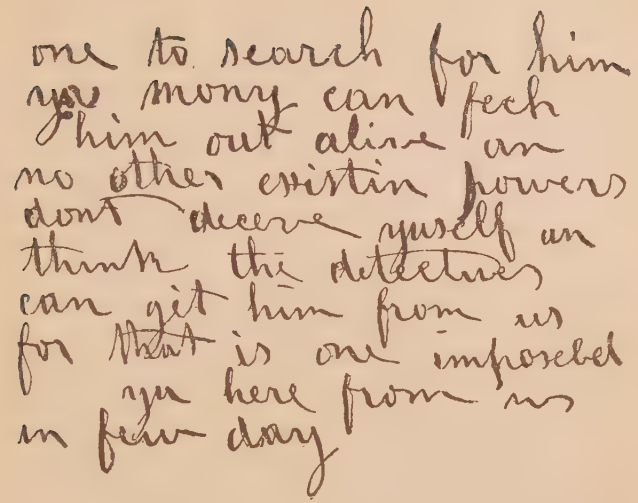
July 3—*Mr. Ros:* be not uneasy you son charley bruster be all writ we is got him and no powers on earth can deliver out of our hand. you wil hav two pay us befor you git him from us, and pay us a big cent to. if you put the cops hunting for him you is only defeeting yu own end. we is got him put so no living power can gets him from us a live. if any aproch is maid to his hidin place that is the signil for his instant anihilation. if you regard his lif puts no one to search for him yu mony can fech him out alive an no other existin powers. dont deceve yuself an think the detectives can git him from us for that is imposebel. you here from us in few day.

This letter, although indefinite, was the first clue towards unravelling the mystery of the case. My friends now persuaded me to take Walter to Atlantic City and inform Mrs. Ross of our loss, who up to this time had not heard one word of it. Although the fact of CHARLEY's being stolen was known to the persons with whom she was staying, they had carefully concealed it from her.

We reached the cottage where she was at about 8 o'clock on the evening of July 4th, in the midst of a fearful storm which continued until morning. One of the very first questions asked by Mrs. Ross was "Why did you not bring CHARLEY along with you? Is he well?" We soon retired to our room, and now came the hardest task of all. I said to her that I had bad news to tell her, yet not so bad as it might be; that CHARLEY had been stolen from us, but we hoped to have him again in a few days. She was extremely anxious to know all



FAC-SIMILE OF THE FIRST LETTER.


one to search for him
yes money can fech
him out alive an
no other existin powers
dont deceive yuself an
think the detectives
can get him from us
for that is one impossibel
yes here from us
in few day

FAC-SIMILE OF THE FIRST LETTER.

the circumstances—for what object he had been taken, and if we had heard anything of him. To these questions and many others, oft repeated, I gave the most favorable answers possible; yet the task was very, very difficult and painful. The anguish of my wife I could not undertake to assuage. Silence, as though in the chamber of death, seemed most fitting. Tears afford an outlet for grief, but with her the fountain was dry. "Oh if I *could cry*, I know I should be relieved of this terrible weight that oppresses me!" was her frequent exclamation. Yet in the midst of this severe affliction, from the first knowledge that her boy had been taken, until now, sustained *as she believes*, and *no doubt has been* by *Him* who will not let a sparrow fall to the ground without His notice, she has attended to all her duties as a mother, ever hopeful that God, who permitted this inscrutable affliction, will yet dissipate the dark cloud, and restore to her the little one she loves so well. The publication of private griefs is rarely admissible; but the loss of our child in so atrocious a way has taken such hold upon public sympathy that there seems to be a necessity for violating the sanctity of home, and giving to the world that which otherwise would have been kept sacredly within our own hearts.

During the afternoon of July 4th, my nephew and Officer Wood prepared an advertisement giving a fuller description of CHARLEY, with an account of the taking away of the children, and offering a reward of $300 for the return of CHARLEY to my place of business, No. 304 Market street. This advertisement appeared in the papers on Sunday, July 5th, and during the following week. They also had printed a large number of bills

similar to the advertisement, which were posted in every public place in the city and surrounding country, and in New Jersey. On the seventh of July my nephew took a package of these posters to New York, and left them with one of the Inspectors of Police in that city.

The first letter from the abductors opened to the authorities a new field for the search. They at once determined that vigorous efforts must be made to ferret out the perpetrators of the outrage, which, by the revelations made in the letter, showed that the crime was not only against one family, but was of such a nature as to menace the security of every home in the land. The mayor of the city instructed Chief Jones and Capt. Heins to use every possible effort to arrest the criminals and recover the child; and if necessary employ every man belonging to the police and detective forces to accomplish these objects. The lieutenants of the several districts were directed to make known to their men the facts of the abduction, and to interest them in the search by appeals to their humanity as well as to their reputation as officers. While all were required to be vigilant, selections of the most reliable men in citizen's dress, and men of families, were made from each police district and put on this special duty. They were required to search every vessel, steam and canal boat on the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers; to examine every suspicious place, public and private; to visit all the ferries leading to New Jersey; to stop all covered vehicles passing over the various bridges; to question keepers of toll-gates in the adjoining counties and New Jersey; to keep watch on the railroad depots day and night; to look into all barns and unoccupied houses;

to go through all known haunts of the criminal classes; to examine the houses of Italians, professional beggars, and all the abodes of vice; to keep watch on every person known as a criminal, or to whom any suspicion was attached; and to examine anew all stables and sheds, both public and private. At a designated hour in the evening they searched all houses of ill repute. Soon followed an order to visit and examine every house, public and private, throughout the whole city. The labor performed was immense; the whole ground appeared to be covered—the time occupied in these duties extending to the middle of August. The officers in the district in which my residence is located extended their search far beyond the city limits into the adjoining counties; visiting every house, making inquiries of the people, examining the barns, out-houses, sheds, and every place in which a horse and wagon might be kept or concealed. They traveled over many miles, and were often absent many days.

The reports of the operations of the police, as made by the various officers, are full—the detail of which, when summed up, shows a vast amount of work done, with a zeal never before known. The search was not confined to our own State; but officers were sent up and down on both sides of the Delaware river. They stopped at all the villages, examined the boats, and put up bills of advertisement. In conjunction with the authorities of Chester, Pa., Wilmington and New Castle in the State of Delaware, they searched all the vessels and boats in the river, and the creeks flowing into it. They also examined all houses in those places that were known to be at all disreputable or suspicious. In the

State of New Jersey, Camden, Gloucester, Burlington, Riverton, and in fact all the villages up to Trenton, were visited and searched, and inquiries of the inhabitants made for the horse and wagon, and men answering to the descriptions. Several officers went to Baltimore and Washington, and with the authorities of those cities looked into the vessels and boats lying at the wharves and in the docks.

It was supposed the child would most probably be concealed on a boat or vessel. Special care was taken to examine canal boats; officers followed the line of the canal as far as Yardleyville, Pa., examining boats, and making inquiry of the lock-tenders, to find out if they had observed a child on any of the boats passing through the locks. At the same time they distributed and posted the descriptive hand-bills. The small villages scattered through the pines of New Jersey, in the counties of Camden and Gloucester, were all visited and examined, and thus publicity was given to the abduction. I cannot better state the feelings and the operations of the police force of this city, than by giving an extract from one of the reports of a Lieutenant to the Chief of Police, dated August 1st, 1874:

"It affords me great pleasure to be able to testify to the sincere interest, and active zeal, universally displayed by the police of this district, in contributing their best efforts towards an intelligent solution of the mysterious crime. Every house or locality in the district of the least doubtful character, or to which the slightest suspicion is attached, has been promptly and thoroughly searched; every person of known evil propensities has been placed under strict surveillance, and

every instance promising the slightest probable clue has been submitted to an early and rigid examination. All coal-yards, lumber-yards, sheds, stalls, out-houses and unoccupied buildings of every description, have been carefully and thoroughly examined. All railroad depots and other centering points of travel have received the closest attention. All vehicles justifying the slightest suspicions, and especially all covered wagons, have been stopped or subjected to the closest scrutiny and inspection. The police of this district have been, and are still, faithfully and diligently inquiring, observing, and doing whatever suggests itself in the matter as worthy of being done," etc., etc.

The above extract indicates the active official interest felt by the whole police force of the city. Similar reports are in my possession from the lieutenants of every district.

While no information was obtained that resulted in discovering any one connected with *this* crime, yet in a number of cases, while searching houses occupied by criminals, merchandise and other valuables were discovered, which led to arrests and conviction for theft and burglary.

On the 19th, 20th, and 22d of June, two men had hired at a certain livery stable a team answering in description to the one we were in search of. On the 23d of June they applied for the same horse and wagon for five days, but failed to get it, because the owner had seen them enter a public house which he knew to be a resort for thieves, and suspected that they designed engaging in some unlawful business. To the officers visiting this house the proprietor refused to reveal who

the men were, or where they could be found, and not until arrested himself did he tell their names and residences. On searching their house, located on one of the most public streets of the city, not the men, but a large quantity of household goods and silver-ware was found, which proved to have been stolen from dwellings in Germantown during the days they had the horse and wagon. The men were subsequently arrested, tried, convicted, and sentenced to imprisonment.

Every possible effort was made by the officers to trace the horse and wagon, and particular attention was paid to find persons who had seen strangers driving on Washington Lane during the last days of June and the first of July.

A few days after the abduction, information was obtained that a number of strangers had been stopping at a hotel on the corner of Main street and Washington Lane, Germantown; that they had horses and wagons, some of which answered the description of those used by the abductors, and that they had been seen repeatedly driving on the Lane. They arrived at the hotel on different days during the month of June, and were acquainted with each other. They were eight in number, and had with them four horses and wagons. On further inquiry it was ascertained that a woman, with a child about four years old, came to the hotel on June 29th, stating that she expected to remain several days; but went away on the evening of July 1st, sending her baggage in one direction while she went in a different one. An employee at the hotel was invited to ride with one of the men, who drove through Washington Lane and other streets in Germantown, and asked the names

of property owners in several instances. At first these strangers seemed actively employed in attending to business; but for a week previous to July 1st had not attempted to do anything.

These circumstances taken together were regarded as suspicious, and required investigation. It was discovered that the horses and wagons were obtained in Camden, N. J., and had been returned. The officers went to Camden, and found the names of all these men on the register of the hotel; but they had left some days previously. The writing was carefully compared with the letters received from the abductors up to this time; but there was no resemblance. This party on leaving Camden had scattered, some having gone to northern New Jersey, others to the State of New York, and the rest to Ohio. The information was deemed sufficient to warrant the following up of the men, woman and child, and a full investigation of the matter.

The very evening before the officers started to New Jersey, the postmaster in the town in which they expected to find two of the men, telegraphed as follows: "The Ross child here; send immediately." This telegram encouraged the belief that we were on the right track. The officers found two of the men at this place, and calling on the postmaster, learned that a man with a boy had applied for permission to stay at the county alms-house, and was denied admittance; that from the description he had of the child, he believed him to be my child. He indicated the direction they had taken. One of the officers remained at the hotel with the men, while the other two followed the one with the child. Traces of them were soon found. On coming to a

bridge the toll collector said the man and child had passed over the bridge a few hours before. He described the boy as of a dark complexion, of foreign—most probably Italian origin; said he spoke broken English, and was about nine years old. This description of the boy so exactly corresponded with that given by other persons along the road, that the officers were satisfied that the child was not the one they were looking for, and they abandoned the pursuit. The bridge-keeper had a likeness of CHARLEY in his office, and said that he was looking out for him, and that he would not have allowed the party to pass over the bridge had the child resembled the lost one. It was subsequently ascertained that they had no connection with the suspected party the officers were sent to trace. This ended the matter, so far as that child was concerned.

The officer who had been left behind entered into conversation meanwhile with the men at the hotel. They stated they had been to Germantown taking orders for trees and shrubbery, and were agents for a large nursery; that they had stopped trying to get orders about a week before the first of July under instructions from their employers, and because the farmers were engaged with their harvest, and would not give attention to anything else; that their object in making inquiries about who owned the properties on Washington Lane and elsewhere, was to find out who were responsible persons, and to whom they might safely sell. They hired teams in Camden, N. J., because they could do so at prices within their allowance for expenses, which was impossible in Germantown. Business being dull, their employers had written them to go to their homes, and

they accordingly had left Germantown, and were when questioned on the way to their several homes. Those living in Ohio were found, also the woman and child. She proved to be the wife of one of the men, and the child was her own.

This search was a long one, based on what were thought very suspicious circumstances when grouped together, but satisfactorily explained when everything was known. The parties of course disclaimed any criminal knowledge of the abduction, and proved very clearly that all our suspicions were groundless.

It was deemed important to find, if possible, other persons besides Walter and Mr. Johnson, who had seen the men driving on the lane during any of the days Walter said they had been there. Officer Wood and my nephew were sent to interrogate every person who had been or was then working in the neighborhood. A number of persons were found who had seen a horse and wagon with two men driving on the lane, which at first they supposed were the kidnappers; but subsequently they satisfied themselves that they were the "tree" men before referred to. So nearly did they correspond to the description we had of the abductors, that it was difficult to distinguish them from the real abductors. They however found Mr. Buddy, who had been working nearly opposite my residence, and who saw the men on the 27th, 29th, and 30th of June, conversing with the children and giving them candy; but who was not at work July 1st. They also found Peter Callahan, a gardener employed by my next neighbor, who saw one of the men walking and holding a handkerchief to his face, whilst the other sat in the wagon

driving the horse. His description of these men was somewhat more minute; but in all essential particulars agreed with that which we had from Walter.

The next day my nephew and I followed up the inquiries, and drove along the route taken by the men, inquiring at every house, of men working in the fields along the line of the road, at the toll-gates, the places where Walter said he got out for water, of the men who were working on the road, and had seen the men with the children pass; in fact, of every one from whom we thought it possible to gain any information; but failed to find any one who could impart additional light on the matter.

Captain Heins, on July 6th, with my nephew, drove to Palmer and Richmond streets, and taking the road along the Delaware river, visited all the villages, and making a wide circuit, stopped at all the watering places, blacksmith shops, and hotels, returning late the same night without being able to hear anything of the parties. Similar excursions were made daily, until the whole country within a radius of ten to twelve miles was thoroughly canvassed.

CHAPTER III.

LETTERS FROM THE ABDUCTORS AND INCIDENTS CONNECTED WITH THE SEARCH.

" OU here from us in few day." This, the closing sentence of the first letter received from the abductors, awakened a most intense desire to know what the next would reveal; and the hours passed slowly whilst waiting with trembling anxiety and painful unrest, to learn what was meant by "You wil have two pay us befor you git him from us, and pay us a big cent to."

The time of waiting was not long. On Monday, July 6th, on my way to Germantown from Atlantic City with Mrs. Ross and the children, the second letter was handed me at my place of business. My brother had read it, and said, "No harm has come to CHARLEY; but $20,000 is demanded for his ransom." "Certainly you have not read rightly," I replied. On opening the letter I too plainly saw the figures $20,000. I was so dumfounded that I read no more at that time; but joined my family with a heavy heart, and went home

At the first favorable opportunity, as I read the letter over, many thoughts passed quickly through my mind. I asked myself, "Can it be possible that the life of our little boy is depending on the payment of so large a sum of money? can it be that men are so hardened as

to harm, nay *kill* an innocent child without cause? will the cruel and cold-blooded threats be executed?"

Although greatly distressed, I felt the necessity of appearing as cheerful as possible in the presence of my wife; and when she desired to see the letter, I told her it was better she should not read it, and endeavored to encourage her with the hope that it could not be long ere CHARLEY would be with us again.

It may be well to say here that Mrs. Ross did not read any of the letters until they were published in the newspapers of September of the following year—except one which is milder in tone than the others, and which was given her to read by her brother. Everything they contained was kept from her, except those portions that referred to CHARLEY'S health. This was done to spare her the torture which the cruel threats would have caused, and was acquiesced in by her without any questioning.

The second letter not only reveals the price fixed as the ransom, but distinctly states that a reward of five times the amount will not secure the restitution of the child. It sets at defiance the powers of the universe to discover the place of his concealment, or that of the persons who stole him; repeats with cruel emphasis the threats of the first letter; and prescribes a means of communicating answers to the writer.

A fac simile of this letter is also given, with that of an envelope, all of which are similar, the address being the same and the postage stamp of each placed on the lower left-hand corner.

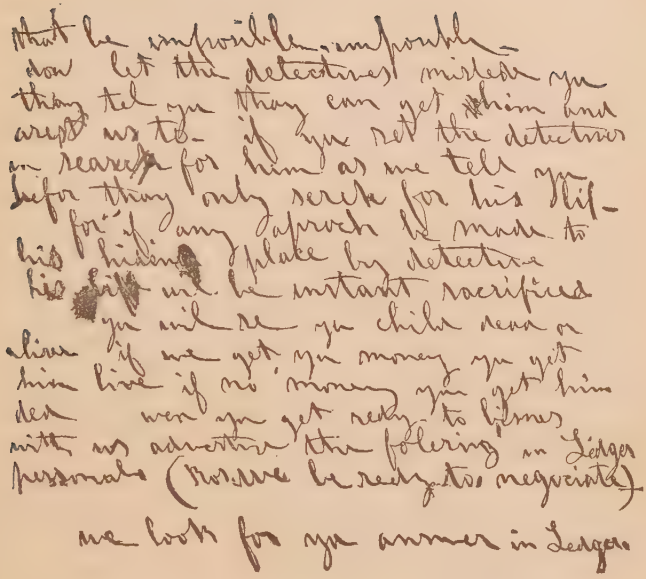
[No. 2.]

PHILADELPHIA, July 6.—*Mr. Ros:* We supos you got the other leter that teld yu we had yu child all saf and sond.

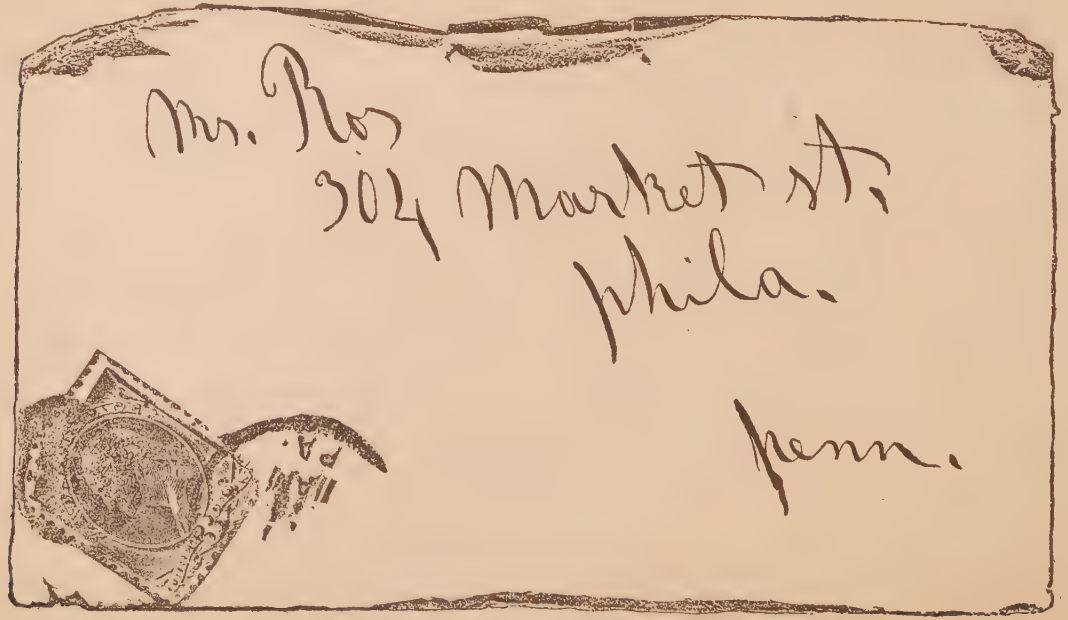
Phila July 6 1870

Mr. Ros— we supos you get the
other letter that tells you we
have child all safe and send—
you rite, offer one $100000
it would avale you nothing—
to be plain with you rite
insult at the powers of the univese
and that could not get yur child
from us— we set you— man and
devel at defiance to rest him of
of our hands—
this is the lever that move
the rock that hides him from you
$20000 not one doler les—
imposible— imposible— you cannot
get him without it— if you love
money more than child you be its
murderer for the money we will have
if we dont get from you we be
sure to get it from some one els
for we will make example of yure
child that others may be wiser—
we give you at the time you want to
consider well what you be doing—
you money or his life we will have
— dont flater you self we will trap
us under pretens of paying the ranso

REDUCED FAC-SIMILE OF THE SECOND LETTER.



Reduced Fac-Simile of thh Second Letter.



FAC-SIMILE OF ADDRESS AND ENVELOPE.

Yu mite ofer one $100,000 it woud avale yu nothing. to be plaen with yu yu mite invok al the powers of the universe and that cold not get yu child from us. we set god—man and devel at defiance to rest him ot of our hands. This is the lever that moved the rock that hides him from yu $20,000. not one doler les—impossible—impossible—you cannot get him without it. if yu love money more than child yu be its murderer not us for the money we will have if we dont from yu we be sure to git it from some one els for we will mak examples of yure child that others may be wiser. We give yu al the tim yu want to consider wel wat yu be duing. Yu money or his lif we wil hav—dont flater yu self yu wil trap us under pretens of paying the ransom that be imposible—d'ont let the detectives mislede yu thay tel yu thay can git him and arest us to—if yu set the detectives in search for him as we teld yu befor they only serch for his lif. for if any aproch be made to his hidin place by detective his lif wil be instant sacrificed. you wil see yu child dead or alive if we get yu money yu get him live if no money yu get him ded. wen you get ready to bisnes with us advertise the folering in *Ledger* personals (Ros. we be ready to negociate). we look for yu answer in *Ledger*.

This letter was received through the post-office on the morning of the sixth of July, is dated and post-marked Philadelphia, and has a three cent postage stamp on the envelope, as have all of them. The same afternoon I took it to the Central Police Office, for the purpose of consulting with the authorities as to what was now to be done.

I stated in the first chapter that the fact of the loss of the child was immediately communicated to them, and no action was taken by me except by their counsel and instructions.

Among the persons present at the reading of the letter were District Attorney Wm. B. Mann, and City Solicitor Charles H. T. Collis. Many comments were made on the letter and the enormity of the crime; but all united in expressing the belief that the threats would never be carried out, the object sought by the

villians being money only; and that as soon as they should be satisfied that they could not accomplish this, the child would probably be left on the street or highway, and thence find his way home.

They all agreed that vigorous efforts must now be made to find the writer of the letters and rescue the child; and decided to reply as directed in the last letter through the personal columns of the *Public Ledger*.

The personal in reply to this letter appeared in the paper on the morning of July 7th, as follows:

"Ros, we be ready to negociate."

Measures were at once adopted by Captain Heins to trace the writer of the letters. He instructed his men to keep close watch on all criminals, particularly those known as confidence men, and detailed a number of officers to visit the hotels to find out if any suspicious strangers were in the city, and to examine the registers to see if any signatures could be found similar to the writing in the letters I had received. They were enjoined to be unremitting and persevering in their efforts.

The letters themselves were minutely examined, every expression and word used, and the formation of every letter was carefully scrutinized.

While it was believed that the author of the letters was the real abductor, yet there was a possibility that they might have been written for the purpose of blackmailing by some one who was not at all connected with the crime; and therefore everything that seemed to bear on the case was investigated. Nothing of a character in the least suspicious was suffered to be passed without satisfactory explanation.

In consequence of the general investigation by the police already in progress for several days, numbers of persons called at the Central Office, professing to have information; some of suspicious persons, and others of horses and wagons which they thought answered the published description. All were heard, and whenever anything seeming to relate however remotely to the case was presented which was suspicious, it was patiently and thoroughly examined.

The personal given above appeared on the morning of July the 7th in the *Public Ledger*. About two o'clock of the same day the following reply was received:

[No. 3.]

PHILADELPHIA, July 7.—*Mr. Ros:* We se yu anser in *Leger* the question with yu is be yu wilin to pay for thosand ponds for the ransom of yu child. without it yu can never get him alive if yu be ready to come to terms say so. if not say so. and we wil act acordinly. we take yu anser either way as granted and wil act on it. we care nothin bout yu schemin and plotin to detect us. that is only childrens play with us. this thing is wel understod with us and is taken out of the power every humin bein to detect us. yu wil find it so at the end of this bisines. the only answer we want from yu now is, be yu wilin to pay $20,000 to save Charley. if yu love yu mony more than him his blood be upon yu and not us fo wil show him up to yu either dead or a live (it is left with yu) anser the folering in *evnin herald* or *star*. *Ros.*—wil come to terms. *Ros.*—wil not come to terms. omit either line yu pleas try the experiment. offer $100,000 reward se if it avales any thing. use the detectives as yu pleas but dont let them mislede yu to the sacrifice of Charley. dont concent to any thing only in good faith. we wil act upon yu word, if yu prove faithles we will prove to yu heart's sorow that wil keep our word to the very letter.

The expectation that something would be revealed in the letters by which the child could be traced, or that a blunder would be committed that would lead to

the detection of the writer, excited the greatest anxiety to receive them, and yet my heart beat with misgiving when they came; the cold chill of horror that followed their perusal cannot be expressed in writing. There appears in this letter a fiendish effort to increase the torture already inflicted, by repeating again and again the cruel threatenings. This, together with the confidence with which the abductors speak of the impossibility to discover the child, and the fearlessness they assumed in boasting of their own security, well nigh led me to despair, and to dread the worst results.

About this time it became known to the public that anonymous letters had been received, and answers had been published in the newspapers. Private citizens now joined in the search; they went by unfrequented roads, as well as the more public highways, through woods and swamps; examined stone-quarries, mills and factories, called at houses and huts scattered through the country, made inquiries of persons wherever they were seen, and told the story of the abduction. Wherever they went the people became interested and excited, and gave information of tramps, gipsies, and suspicious men and women—very often exaggerated reports; but, nevertheless, the parties were looked up, and forced to give such account of themselves as would clear them of any connection with this crime, which now was rightly beginning to be regarded as committed against the public, and striking at the peace and security of the whole community. Many of the searches made by private citizens extended over a large area of country. They traveled night and day, never stopping until the object of their pursuit had been reached. Thus was the intelligence

quickly carried to the whole country surrounding the city.

When it became known in the city that a large sum of money was demanded for the return of the child, and that his life was held as the forfeit, the greatest excitement prevailed; men stopped on the streets and talked over the outrage, denominating it the worst offense ever committed in our country. Women were afraid to permit their children to go out of their sight. It was the subject of conversation in stores, in families, and on the cars. Newspapers were eagerly bought up to find out what was the latest intelligence. Vengeance was declared against the abductors, and sympathy expressed for the child and parents. Many amateur detectives offered their services, both male and female, ready to go anywhere, or do anything, that would aid in finding the child or his abductors.

Even criminals themselves joined in the general clamor for the ferreting out of such heartless offenders. "Bad as we are, and as you know us to be," they said, "we would only be too glad to give information, if we could, that would lead to the exposure of the perpetrators of such an unnatural crime." The worst criminals being apprehensive of popular vengeance, and knowing they were under close surveillance, stood in awe, fearing that they might be accused of complicity, or even be suspected of guilty knowledge of the abduction. In consequence of this dread, and the vigilance of the police, the city for months was comparatively free from crime.

The letter carriers were instructed to keep memoranda of the street boxes from which they obtained

letters addressed to me, in order if possible to fix the locality where the writer lived. The drop boxes both outside and inside the Post Office were watched. Neither of these plans resulted in discovering anything: The letters came without interruption.

Letters were now received from other persons, some anonymous, and evidently disguised. All were compared by experts with the letters from the abductors; the writing of blackmailers or confidence-men was obtained and closely scrutinized; in fact, every suggestion made which was thought might result in throwing light on this mysterious correspondence was tried; but without resulting in any practical good.

In June, about ten days before the abduction took place, three strangers arrived at one of the large hotels. They came at different hours, and registered their names as coming from different places. They appeared not to know each other; but very soon it was discovered by an observing clerk of the hotel that they were acquainted. His attention being attracted to them, he watched their movements both in the hotel and on the streets; and satisfying himself they were about to engage in some unlawful enterprise, he sent for a detective officer to look after them. They were followed and watched for days, without the officer discovering anything criminal in their conduct.

After the abduction, the officer who had been watching their movements suspected that they were connected with the kidnapping, and upon examining the hotel register detected a similarity in the writing of one of them to that of the letters I had received, and called the attention of a number of other persons to it, who

agreed that the matter demanded further investigation. On inquiry, he found the men had gone away, and the only means by which they could be traced was a copy of an address of a letter mailed by one of the men, which pointed to New York as his possible home.

On this supposition two detectives and my nephew undertook to find him and his companions. Arriving at New York they obtained the assistance of a detective officer, and after patient waiting and watching for several days and nights, the man was seen to enter the house where they hoped to find him. Information was received also while waiting in New York that the other two men, who had been in the hotel in Philadelphia, were in a village in Pennsylvania. The two officers proceeded at once to Pennsylvania, found one of the men, and brought him to Philadelphia. The following day the one who resided in New York left for Reading, Pa., pursued by my nephew. He there received a telegram from his companion in Philadelphia, that he was under arrest, and to come on immediately. The next train was taken. My nephew telegraphed to an officer to be at the depot on the arrival of the train, where the New York man was also arrested. Both of the men were brought into the presence of Walter, who said he had never seen them. They also underwent a rigid examination by District Attorney Mann and others, in which they acquitted themselves satisfactorily of any connection with the abduction.

The last letter, No. 3, asked for an answer the same day it was received, in the *Evening Herald* or *Star*, showing a desire to hasten the negotiations. The letter reached me too late to reply in the afternoon papers,

and the following personal appeared in the *Public Ledger* of July 8th.

"Ros will come to terms, to the extent of his ability."

This personal, as well as all others that were afterwards published, except the last two in the N. Y. *Herald* of Nov. 15th and 19th, was prepared by the authorities, who in the interests of public justice had full and complete charge of the case. Everything was referred to them, that they might adopt whatever means they thought best to discover the writer of the letters, being satisfied that if successful in that, they would find out the abductors and recover the child.

To the personal of the 8th of July, the following reply was received:

[No. 4.]

PHILADELPHIA, July 9.—*Ros.* we is set your price. We ask no more. we takes no les we no the extent yu bility. how mucht time yu want to obtain this money. yu is only in part answered our question. the only question for yu to answer is is u got it and be wilin to pay it then we wil proceed to bisiness at once. is it necessary to repeat the fatle consequences of delayin to give time to detectives to find his hidin place. we teld yu it be posible to find his place, but imposible to find him. no aproch can be made to it without a known signal and any stranger forcibly comin to it wold be the signal for his instant anihilation were he wold never be herd of. this makes our party safe and shows yu that if it come to extremes we wil spare not the child. thus yu se al the detectives in the country could avale yu nothin only Jeopodisin his life Ros this undertaken cost us $1000 to prepare the machenery to perform the work therefor consider wel befor yu consent to pay it. for pay it you have to or sacrifice yu child. we want no other anser but this and on the fath of yu word his lif hang. Ros i is got it and be wilin to pay it. this anser or omition it satifies us.

In this letter there is evidently a design to impress me that the amount of money required to restore

CHARLEY was *fixed.* Objection is made to this part of the personal, "To the extent of my ability." The cruel threats of the previous letters are repeated, and the life of CHARLEY made to depend on the abductors' personal safety. A more powerful stimulant to our fears could not have been devised.

They also state the sum expended in preparing their plans, showing that they were pre-arranged, and end by dictating another personal, committing me to a positive assertion that I had the money and was willing to pay it.

The boldness which the abductors assumed, struck every one conversant with the facts with amazement. That three days after the crime was committed, a letter should be received, announcing that the child was taken for a price, and almost daily correspondence be kept up, defying the efforts of the most acute to detect the least mistake or to get a single trace of the writer, was admitted by all to be unparalleled in their experience. Efforts, however, continued to be unremitting. Nothing was omitted that could be devised to obtain a starting point from which to work; but all efforts failed, and thus day after day passed without a ray of light to guide us amidst the impenetrable darkness.

The newspapers of this and other cities made known the fact of the abduction very soon after the loss of the child, and eagerly sought for intelligence to be imparted to the public. While a great deal was published that had a basis of fact, yet much was erroneous. Their reports were extensively copied by the papers throughout the country. Thus thousands of people became very soon acquainted with the abduction.

In the early part of July, while two officers were pursuing a band of gipsies, which they had followed several days, they were informed at Havre de Grace, Md., that two men and a small boy, who was called CHARLEY, answering to the published description of the abductors and the child, were traveling with a horse and wagon through the unfrequented roads, and following the small streams, in the direction of Baltimore The officers telegraphed to Philadelphia that they would follow them. About the same time several letters reached me, describing the same men and child, and urging that they should be pursued. A telegram was also received, dated Belle Air, Md.—"A child supposed to be CHARLEY ROSS passed through here last night, the detectives twenty-four hours behind."

The pursuit now became exciting. It was difficult to follow the party, as they avoided the public roads. After the chase had been kept up several days, the officers stopping at a factory were informed by parties there that they knew the persons; that they lived in Baltimore and were selling patent rights for making machine oil, and for that reason followed the smaller streams, to visit the mills and factories located on them. The officers went to Baltimore, found them, and satisfied themselves they were pursuing a legitimate business, and that the child belonged to one of the men. They again took up the gipsy trail, which had been abandoned, to look after what they supposed a better clue. Whilst this pursuit was going on, great excitement prevailed for days; nothing was heard from the officers, but the painful suspense was at last terminated

by a telegram, "Wrong." The gipsies were also found; and discovering nothing to warrant any suspicion against them, the officers returned home after an absence of ten or twelve days.

Many reports were made by persons residing in the city, of children whom they supposed were in charge of improper persons, or of others who were believed not to be under the protection of their lawful guardians. Sometimes this was done by one neighbor to gratify a grudge against another. In other instances where a family had changed their residence about the time of the abduction, and had a little boy with light curly hair, we were pretty certain to hear of it. This showed the vigilance and interest of the whole people.

It was a matter of much speculation as to how the exchange of the money for the child would be proposed, and at the same time how the abductors would guard themselves against detection. There seemed to be no suggestion that could be made to cover these points. It was, however, said by Capt. Heins that the person who conceived the plot, and who had so skillfully managed it, had his way to accomplish that part also.

It remained however for the fertile imagination of a correspondent of one of the newspapers to devise a plan, and give it as really the one which was proposed by the abductors. It has been called the "Bridge Story," and was copied by the newspapers all over the country, and is as follows:

The place selected by the kidnappers for these negotiations is a lonely bridge in the extreme northern part of the county, and the hour in which the business is to be transacted is set down at midnight. The bridge is surrounded on all sides by a flat and open country, so that one standing upon its abutment could witness an approach from any direction. The

plan states that Mr. Ross must come to this bridge with the money. While *en route* for the designated point, and before he arrives at it, he will be met by a man who will step before him and say—"Good evening, sir." To this Mr. Ross must render an immediate reply, and then pass on towards the bridge. A second man will approach him in the same manner as the first, and say, "Mr. Ross, how do you do." To this Mr. Ross must also render an appropriate reply, when he will reach the bridge, and there meet a third man, who will ask the following question: "Mr. Ross, have you got that?" After Mr. Ross has paid the money there will be a slight delay; but in a few moments he is promised that his little one, CHARLEY, will be delivered over. The robbers elude all possibility of detection by the following conditions: The three men will be armed and in disguise If Mr. Ross does not come alone, or if a single soul is seen lurking anywhere in the neighborhood, the kidnappers will fail to keep their appointment. The bridge stands all by itself, three different roads intersect its site; and the country being open and level as the floor, the confederates stationed out along the different roads can see Mr. Ross for a long distance off, and know whether he comes alone or with some one else. Moreover, Mr. Ross will be watched from the time he leaves the city until the time he is accosted by the first man, and any attempt to assemble a posse of citizens or police near the bridge will be sure to be seen by the kidnappers, whom, of course, the policemen do not know.

Many persons in our own city called on me and offered suggestions as well as their services to circumvent this plan. They did not stop to think that there is no locality such as described, and when asked where they supposed the bridge to be, at once saw that it was all a fiction. Persons at a distance wrote letters giving their ideas of the manner in which the parties could be entrapped, and both money and child recovered. Some of these plans are original, but appeared ridiculous to those knowing the facts of the case. A gentlemen in California suggested that large logs be hollowed out and fastened near or under the bridge, and that on the evening of the day for the exchange men of known

courage be secreted in them, and covered over with brush and moss; that after I had possession of the child, these emerge from their hiding places, attack the party who have the money and compel them to surrender, and thus recover it. He showed his sincerity by adding that he would like to come to Philadelphia and be one of the number to engage in this undertaking, if I would notify him of the time the proposed exchange would take place. Another gentleman proposed the following:

A sufficient number of tried men can be brought into the neighborhood a week before the time fixed for the exchange; perhaps in the bottom of vegetable carts, concealed in boxes, and covered up with vegetables. They must have cloaks the color of the soil, and make their way in the night by creeping across the country under the cloaks to a suitable rendezvous near the bridge, where they must dig a cave capable of holding them all, and find some means of disposing of the dirt. The hole must be roofed, and the roof covered with soil, holes being made for ventilation and ingress, covered with cloth the color of the soil. They should assemble there the night before the one appointed, and keep out of sight all the next day. On the night chosen they should creep out after dark alongside of the roads, under their cloaks, with wool on the soles of their shoes, and lie flat on the ground, having night glasses, etc., etc. By nightly observations during the week, they will have observed, without being seen, the movements of the confederates. Their food and water will be stored in the rendezvous; and if they have the patience and endurance that every hunter has to practice in creeping upon game, and can hunt for such a reward as the friends of Ross, who are parents, can afford to pay, I don't see what is to prevent their capturing the man who takes the ransom, and compelling him to restore the money and child under fear of death. The confederates after so much observation might be tracked to their lairs, and some of them would likely be caught with the principal offender.

Another writes thus:

In this morning's *Herald* I read an account of the kidnapping of little CHARLEY ROSS. Sympathizing as I do with the afflicted family, although

unknown to me, I presume to write you, and to suggest that if Mr. Ross would go to the designated spot and get his child, and if he could secure a pack of good blood-hounds, they could be put on the track of these scoundrels as late as six hours after leaving the place. I am a Southerner, and have known this to succeed time and again, when all else failed. Should the parties take to the water, the hounds can be sent up and down the embankments; and after they are once on the trail, they (if good) will not mistake the scent. Being a parent, my sympathies are very much exercised in behalf of this sorely distressed family.

Hoping you will be successful, I am yours, SOUTHERNER.

These selections, from many other letters that were received, not only show a great desire that the abductors be captured and the child restored; but a willingness to aid in accomplishing these results, by suggestions, and in some instances by being active participants.

On the 9th of July the following personal appeared in the *Public Ledger:*

"Ros is willing. Have not got it; am doing my best to raise it."

No answer was made to this personal. In its wording it does not follow strictly the form; and accordingly, no letter being received in reply to it, on the 13th of July another was inserted in the same paper, in the very words prescribed:

"Ros is got it, and is willing to pay it."

On the same day the following answer was received:

[No. 5.]

PHILADELPHIA, July 13—*Ros:* Yu say yu be redy to comply. we presume yu have wel considered be for yu maid this promis we take yu at yu word and we hold the lif of yu son to the strictest performanc of yu word. we want yu mony. yu want yu child. the question between us is do yu mean to give the mony or do yu think by holdin out a fals promis to ensnare us into the hands of the authority. i want to explane this mater to yu so yu wil not deceve yu self for it is imposible for the wole detective force combind to put even one of us in the power of the law. in transfering yu mony to us be for yu get yu child yu have got

to rely entirely on our word. we ask no more money. we wil take no les. if we wanted more we wold ask it now. in 5 ours after we receve the mony and find it corect, yu wil se yu child home saf. Aft we gets the mony we has no further use for the child, an it is our interest then to restor him home unharmed, so that others will rely on our word. if we don't get the mony from yu the child's life wil an shall be sacrificed. consider wel, then, wat yu be doin, for any promis yu mak us we hold the life yu child to bind you to it. Ros, it would be more satisfact to yu to give this mony to the detectives than us, but if we git it yu git yu child—if not yu child must die, that we can sho others that we mak no threths wich we don't kepe. Ros, it is our place to dictate, yues to comply. be you redy to pay it as we dictate. if so, have the $20,000 in United States notes. in denomination not excedin "tens." have yu money were yu can git it any moment wen cal for, the detectives, wen they read this, wil tel yu they have now got the key that opens the secret, but don't be misled by them (we alone hold the lock wich is yu child, if they open the dor for yu it wil only revele his (ded body) if yu regard his life let a fatherly love be yu gide. Ros, yu have inevitably got to part with yu mony or yu child, wich is certain as death itself. any fals act on yu part seals the fate of yu child an closes any further bisiness with us. consider wel, an if these terms agre with yu anser the folerin. Ros, it is redy, yu have my word for it. we look for the answer in the *Evenin Star*.

In this letter warning is given in case deception should be practiced upon the abductors. The time of five hours is required after receiving the money, before restoring the child. An intimation is given that it was the purpose of the writer to pursue the business of kidnapping, and that my child must suffer, if I failed to comply with the demands, so that other persons would be convinced that the threats made would be put into execution, in the event I did not accede to their terms. The kind and denomination of money they required is stated, directions given that I should have it on hand at a moment's notice, and the menace made that if I act falsely in complying with any part of the demands, the fate of the child will be sealed, and all further negotiations

cease. It also discloses part of the plan they had arranged, to make the exchange without exposing themselves to detection. During the five hours required, after getting the money and before delivering up the child, they would examine it, take him where he could be found, and make their escape. By requiring the money to be in U. S. notes not exceeding ten dollars, they guarded themselves against being traced in the future, if the attempt were made to exchange or pass notes of larger amounts.

The requirement that I was to have the money near me at all times, indicated that at any moment I might be called upon for it. For my protection Capt. Heins detailed two officers in citizen's dress to be near me wherever I went on the street; to secrete themselves at my place of business and at my home, during the night as well as the day; so that for about three weeks I was never unattended. Every means was made use of to arrest the person who should make the demand for the money. Officers were also detailed to remain at my house constantly, for about three weeks.

As the plot was being developed, the greater was my anxiety. I keenly realized the increasing danger to which my little CHARLEY was exposed; and while I was encouraged to hope that he would not be injured by those who had possession of him, yet the fact of his being forcibly carried away among strangers I feared would seriously injure his health, even if it should not be attended with danger to his life. This served to increase the anxiety of both my wife and myself.

As the public knew that a large sum of money was demanded for the restoration of the child, a great curi-

osity prevailed to see and read the letters. Many acquaintances and strangers desired to satisfy themselves if the reports which were current were true.

Newspaper reporters of this city and correspondents of other cities were importunate to have the letters, that they might be lithographed and published. To all I stated, that they had been read and examined by all who by their counsel were assisting to discover the abductors, as well as those who were more actively working in the case; and by their advice as well as by the instructions of my counsel, I was enjoined not to permit them to be read, or pass out of my possession for publication;—the reasons for which were, that no possible good could result by their being read indiscriminately, or by allowing them to be lithographed, and great injury might ensue—moreover, that there certainly would be attempts made to counterfeit them, in which event it would be difficult to distinguish the genuine from the false. Another and an important reason for withholding the letters from the public, was my desire that Mrs. Ross should not know of the threats they contained.

On Saturday, 11th of July, postal cards containing an account of the loss of CHARLEY, with a description of him and requesting the people to unite in the search, were sent to the pastors of all the churches in the city, with a request to read them the following day to their congregations. Another large poster was prepared, giving fuller descriptions than the first one, and placed in all conspicuous places in the city and neighborhood.

On July 13th the following note was sent by the Chief of Police to editors of all the newspapers in the city of Philadelphia:

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE,
PHILADELPHIA, *July 13, 1874.*

DEAR SIR:—In the interests of public justice, I ask that you will give orders that nothing be published in your papers touching the case of Mr. Ross' child for a few days. Yours Respectfully,

KENNARD H. JONES, Chief of Police.

Many of the papers, in their eagerness to print anything relating to the case, had published the doings of the police, and thus informed the abductors of every step made in the efforts to capture them. The most injudicious of these publications was the announcement that the post-office was being watched. Up to this time all the letters had been dropped in the boxes of the main office, and the day on which it was published, detectives were both inside and outside of the office. Immediately after its appearance, and while the officers were still on the watch, a letter was dropped in a street box, as were all that were subsequently mailed in Philadelphia.

I will here relate a pleasant episode connected with my sad narrative. About July 13th, a gentleman of this city, a stranger to me, to whom it had become known that $20,000 was demanded as a ransom for CHARLEY, by a note requested an interview with me, to which I at once replied, that whenever it was agreeable to him I would be pleased to see him. He called upon me the same day, and after introducing himself, added that he had sought this interview, not from motives of curiosity, but because he thought he might render me a service, if I felt inclined to talk freely with him. He then asked me if I had confided to any one my pecuniary circumstances, and whether I had freely and fully expressed my inmost feelings to any person regarding the present terrible affliction.

I replied, "To no one outside of my own and my wife's family, from whom nothing had been concealed."

The gentleman then said: "If you will tell me your real condition, I may be able to assist you." To this I unhesitatingly acceded, and told him everything he desired to know of myself and the abduction, at the same time adding that as to the taking away of the children and the keeping of CHARLEY I was absolutely and entirely ignorant, both of the parties who had done it and of their object, except as it was revealed in the letters I had received—that to me it was a more perplexing mystery than it could possibly be to any one less interested.

He replied, "Do you wish to pay the ransom, and run the risk of getting the child in five hours? If you do, I will *give* you twenty thousand dollars, and never ask you to return one cent."

Such an exhibition of generosity and practical sympathy I was unprepared for. It overwhelmed me for a moment. On recovering myself I replied, "I thank you, sir, I cannot accept your generous offer; for having taken the position that I would not compound the felony, I prefer continuing to make efforts to find the criminals; hoping, if successful in getting them, that I will recover my child, and probably prevent a repetition of child-stealing for a ransom."

He then asked me what were Mrs. Ross's feelings on the subject; to which I replied, that I had no doubt she would make almost any sacrifice to get her child back, as any mother would do; but that she also was willing to endure, if her family and friends thought it best.

With peculiar pleasure do I recall this magnanimous act. In the hour of my deepest darkness, the light of such practical human sympathy, though bright in itself, was doubly so because of the deepened shadows which suspicion had thrown over the cruel facts. In the deep depravity and selfishness of wicked men, my child was stolen; in the kindly sympathy of a stranger was found a heart large enough, and a hand generous enough, voluntarily to meet the utmost demands. Great exigencies bring out great virtues. This great crime thus brought out this generous offer.

SWING IN CHARLEY'S PLAY-GROUND.

CHAPTER IV.

PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE CASE—REWARD OFFERED.

CHILDREN never seemed half so precious as now. A new cause of anxiety and a new apprehension was carried by men to their daily business. A new reason for thankfulness was found that the kidnapper had not invaded the family circle during their absence. Men awoke to the existence of a danger to which their children were exposed, of which before they had had no suspicions, and to the grateful acknowledgment of a protecting Providence in a direction in which before they had no fears. This trepidation of families was manifested in that, if a child was absent from home for only a few hours, the parents became agitated and anxious, fearing that kidnappers had dragged it off. Instances were reported in the newspapers almost daily of children supposed to have been stolen, but who were soon discovered, having strayed away. Mendicants were closely watched, lest they should entice or carry off a child. So great was the alarm that every possible precaution was taken by parents to protect their children from being kidnapped. Even little children themselves realized the danger to which they were exposed, and would shudder and cry out with alarm upon the approach of suspicious-looking persons, who they supposed might carry them away.

In consequence of this general interest felt by the public, and the great enormity of the crime, a number of gentlemen, well known as persons of good judgment and high social standing, conferred together and determined to render what services they could in trying to unravel the mystery which surrounded the case. Among others were Mr. George W. Harrison, President of the Board of Public Charities, Mr. John C. Bullitt, and Mr. Wm. McKean, editor of the *Public Ledger*. To these gentlemen every thing connected with the abduction was made known. The letters from the abductors, as well as all other letters that had been received, were submitted to them for examination. They were informed of all the means that had been used to discover the men, horse and wagon; in fact a complete account was given to them of all that had been done by the authorities and by private individuals, who had been interested in the case from the 1st day of July.

Before these gentlemen engaged in the investigation of the case, by request of Mr. Bullitt and Mr. McKean, I met them, and underwent a most searching examination with regard to my private, social and business life. Without any reservation upon my part, they were made acquainted with every thing they desired to know; the object of this examination being, as I understood it, to discover if there could be any other motive for the abduction than that of extorting money.

Immediately after my interview with them, they began to examine into everything that seemed either remotely or more directly to bear on the case. They were "instant in season and out of season"—ready at all times, night or day, to give advice, or make sugges-

tions as to what should be done, and often went to distant places to investigate matters requiring examination. There was no plan of any importance adopted without their judgment and approval, and whatever measures they proposed were carried out.

Nearly two weeks had now elapsed since CHARLEY was stolen, and the entire community became impatient because nothing had been discovered that seemed to shed any light on the dark mystery. Many persons began to find fault with the police, and censured them for not finding the criminals and the child, charging them with being mercenary; others, because every effort thus far had proved fruitless, began to whisper that if the police wanted to be successful, they should look nearer to the home of the child; intimating that the parents had in some way connived at the secretion of the child, and that they would prove the real abductors. It was whispered that CHARLEY was not the child of my wife, and many other like unkind and false statements passed from one to another. But our *one* great trouble made these lesser trials seem trivial.

Few persons were prepared to believe that a child could or would be stolen in this country for the sole object of a ransom. The crime was so atrocious that they could not realize that the helplessness and innocence of childhood would be taken advantage of to rend the heart-strings of parents for the sake of gain, and this too as a traffic; hence everybody cast about to find some other motive for the act.

These whisperings and insinuations were collected, and furnished the correspondent of a newspaper with matter for a long letter; which letter, however, was not

published until every effort was made and inducement held out to the authorities and myself to furnish the same paper with the letters which had been received from the abductors for publication. After the correspondent's letter appeared, it was copied extensively throughout the country, and increased incalculably the torment which we were then enduring.

In addition to this, letters were sent from various places to the Mayor and Chief of Police, extracts from a few of which are here given as specimens.

One person suggests that the Mayor should send a large force of men to dig up the grounds around my house to the depth of one or two feet, and believes they will find the child.

Another writes thus:

CHIEF OF POLICE.—Has it ever occurred to you that the Ross boy was stolen by his own father? Signed, $20,000.

A person writes the Mayor:

W. S. STOKLEY.—*Sir:* I am under the impression that if you will send sufficient force and thoroughly search the house of Mr. Ross, that you will find the child, Chas. B. Ross, concealed in one of the rooms of the house in charge of a lady. "Do not delay." If the child is found I will call for a reward. Signed, ———

Another from the far South writes:

MAYOR OF PHILADELPHIA.—*Dear Sir:* I have a peculiar opinion that may assist your detectives in finding the child and thief. If my views lead to the discovery I shall rely on you for a sufficient reward. I believe that Ross (the father) is the villain, with one accomplice; that his accomplice captured the child and conveyed him to an appointed place. The motive—a desire to levy blackmail from his friends and the city. Ross I do not know. He may stand well; but I believe if you will secretly look to him for his child, it will be found in his control, and he will prove the villain, with an accomplice. If he does not know all about the child, how can he express confidence in its good treatment and safety? How unnatural that a father whose child had been kidnapped could express confidence in the humane action of the kidnappers.

Ross is the only one who seems able to suggest a method for delivering the ransom and receiving the child. This plan gives him complete control of the funds, and enables him to appropriate them at pleasure.

I may be wrong in my suspicions, and would be far from doing violence to the reputation of an honest man, or injuring the wounded feelings of an outraged father; still the conviction rests upon my mind that Ross has planned and managed the whole affair, in conjunction with an accomplice; that he knows where the child is and controls him, and that the stupendous scheme of villainy was begotten by him for the purpose of making money. I know my convictions may seem unnatural at first; but read all the reports, and see whether they do not point more directly to Ross than any other character, and put your detectives quietly to examine his *skirts*. Signed, ———

Dated July 15th, 1874.

Whether prompted by malice, love of gossip, or the hope of reward, these slanders continued to be repeated, until in September a letter appeared in a newspaper in our State, purporting to be based on information obtained from a person from Germantown, which was so flagrant a violation of truth, that my friends advised and insisted that my family must be defended by an appeal to the courts.

Suit for libel was instituted against the proprietors of this paper. They acknowledged the falsity of the statements, and confessed that great injury had been done to us. After being reprimanded by the Judge for the gross abuse of the liberty of the press, and a fine of $1,000 being imposed, they were discharged. This ended the further publication of reports that endeavored to connect my family or myself with the commission of the crime.

The following personal appeared in the *Public Ledger* of July 14th, in answer to letter No. 5:

"Ros, Came too late for *Evening Star*. It is redy: you have my word for it."

Not getting a reply to the above as promptly as we had to the previous personals, the following was put in the personal column of the *Ledger*, July 15th:

"Ros, am anxiously awaiting an answer."

It should be understood that the extraordinary excitement in which we were then living was so great that the time intervening between the appearance of the personals and the receipt of answers, made hours seem like days.

On the 16th of July the following reply was received:

[No. 7. Dropped in letter-box on Delaware avenue, somewhere south of Spruce street.]

PHILADELPHIA, July 16—*Res:* The reason we did not respond to yu answer was we had to go a bit out in the country an the blasted old orse give out so we could not get back in time. We went as much as anything to se how Charley was. Yu have our word that he is yet safe—in health an no harm done him thoug he is uneasy to get home with Walter. he is afraid he won't get home in time to go to Atlantic City with his mother when Saly comes back. Ros, yu understand the condition the money was to be given us. We wold gladly give yu Charley befor we got the mony but that wold be imposible under the existing circumstances. Yu must satisfy yuself that yu wil git him after we git the mony an find it corect and no sly marks put on the notes. We told yu we wold place him in yu hands in 5 ours after we fond the mony corect but that we can not do but our word for it that yu shall have him insid of 10 ours an may our blasted sols be eternaly damed if we do not keep our word with yu—as we said befor after we gits the mony we have no further use for the child but we have a big object in restoring him to yu safe and sound. We shall be redy we think by Saturday to efect a change with yu (the child for the mony). Ros—we want to impres upon yu mind the grate danger in efecting this change—the danger lies intirely with yuself if yu wish to make a change an absolute certainty yu must comply in every particular as we instruct yu then a failure is imposible. the first place, yu must not let the detectives no how yu are to setle this bisiness (not that we fear them at all) in aresting one of us for as we told yu that is imposible—but they wil

secretly interfear in this bisiness in some underhanded way to prevent the mony from findin its way to us—we are going to deal with yu alone an yu only, an if yu call in any others to give you a counter advice from ours then yu mistake wil be yu own misfortune. let yu friends advise yu and not the detectives they study their own interest an the interest of society. yu have a duty to perform to yuself that stands paramount to all else in the world an if yu ever expect to regain yu child a live, yu alone with the advice of yu friends must perform it. we wil give you this much incite into our bisiness—that if any arest is made it wil be an inocent person who wil be ignorant of the part he is actin. but it is imaterial with us wether it be an inocent person or one of our own party the moment any arest is made or any clandestine movements in transmiting this mony to us it will be conclusive evidence with us that yu have broken yu faith with us an that our we pledge our selves befor all the gods in the universe if there be an god exist that yu child shal die an we wil give yu an ocuild prof of it an then all further business with us ceases. (yu have answered al that is necesary at present. we have yu word for it.) we want yu to nail this mony up in a smal strong ruf box an have it were yu can git it at a minutes notice. mark on it (Drugs for H H H.

This letter intimates that CHARLEY is not with the writer, and that he and his confederates have taken a trip to see him. It says that CHARLEY wants to come home to Walter, and that he is *afraid that he will not get home in time to go to Atlantic City to be with his mother when Saly* (should be Sophy) *comes back.* It guards against any private marks being put on the money, and extends the time from five to ten hours before returning the child after they receive the money. By blasphemies it endeavors to confirm their promises, and to impress me with the great danger of attempting to deceive them. It fixes the day for the exchange, and endeavors to induce me to have nothing to do with the detectives; saying that the business will be closed with me alone, and threatens to *kill* the child should any attempt be made to arrest the person who may come

for the money. It also states how the money should be put up, that it may be ready at a moment's notice when called for.

Matters now seemed to be drawing to a close. Every advantage that the circumstances gave to the abductors seemed to have been considered, and was brought out prominently in the letters, to intimidate me and prevent deception upon my part, and to protect themselves against detection.

The time appointed for the exchange was the following Saturday. The correspondence was closed, no answer being required to this letter.

The three intervening days were spent in nervous anxiety. This feeling was participated in by every one who knew the contents of the letter; and every precaution was devised by the authorities and their counselors to frustrate the plans of the abductors, and to follow the person who should call for the box, and arrest the parties with whom he should afterwards communicate.

I felt that it was a fearful risk, involving the life of the child, and in painful agony the hours were passed. The terrible threats, enforced by the dreadful blasphemies, caused me to feel that the life of our little boy was hanging by a single hair.

Savages before despatching their *enemies* frequently torture them by tearing the flesh piece-meal from the quivering limbs of their victims; but these men remorselessly, in the hope of gain, increased by every stroke of the pen the torture which they had already inflicted; not upon *enemies*, but upon those who had never injured them, and were not even known to them.

My friends endeavored to convince me that the terri-

ble crime of murder would not be added to that already committed, for the reason that it was to the interest of the abductors to protect the child, as on his life was based their only hope of getting the ransom.

Saturday came and passed away without any demand being made for the box; but the following letter was received:

[No. 8.]

PHILADELPHIA, July 18.—*Ros:* we be at a los to understand yu a week ago yu sed yu had the amont an was wilin to pay it the editorials seme to speak as if the mony wus yet to be contributed befor yu could pay it. this wold be a terable mistake for yu to have it caled for an yu had it not to hand out for it wold never be solicited the second time. if yu mean square bsiness with us we wil do al we promis yu. if yu mean stratigem it is imaterial wether yu hav the mony or not yu can try the game as wel without the mony as with it. if yu trap any one it wil be some one we care nothin abot only we lose the mony (yu lose the child) we be redy to test it soon as you say mony is redy. we se the pealers has coped a lad an grate prase is given them for their efficiency but we care nothin for him but if it was one of our chums they had, yu child wold have dide within an our after it, an al further negotiations wold cease at once. yu wil find in the end that the cops can do nothn for yu in this case, thay are as far of the track now as the day they started in persuit of the game. we cautioned yu against setin the pealers or cops as som here cal them lookin for the chilld. don't yu believe us when we tel yu that they only search for the child's life. The blasted editorials have got the city in such a feve bout the child that we can hardly do anything. i tel yu they endanger the child's life at every stroke of the pen. one editor wants to kno why we dont give yu some prof that we ever had the child by sendin some of his close or a lock of hair we have our reason for not sending them. to satisfy yu we have him yu remember his striped stockins are darned in two or three places were they had holes in. ask Walter if we did not put the blanket up in front of him an Charley in behind to hide them. ask Walter if we did not say we wold go down to aunt Susans befor we went out on the mane street to buy torpedos. Ros—if yu ever want yu child restored to yu a live yu have got to act with us alone yu and yu friends only. we tel yu positivly if yu love yu child the detectives are yu worst enemies. if yu have them in yu service they will be the

means of yu losin yu child forever. if they interfea in our bisines we can never efect the change an death inevitably will be the result. we can not keep the child forever. we don't want to keep him any longer than to give yu time to procur the mony we thought yu were better fixt for money or we would never took yu child but since we have him we shal cary out our plan with him. this corosponence with us must stop short we wil not keep it up longer. befor yu git this we shal join our friends at a distance but we wil notice al yu have to say either in ledger star or herald or sunday dispatch anything you wish to communicate to us head it C R R instead of Ros. dont let yu wife be foolishly led by the Spiritualist to think they can tel her anything bout Charley. there is but one thing on earth outside of us that has the power to tel yu an that is the money. yu wil find in the end that we speak truth for once, This man Woster is innocent he has nothin to do with us, do as yu please with him an make the most out of him yu can. our advice to yu is an we hope yu will take it for once that is dont yu state in personals that yu have the mony until yu have it naled up in the box we described to you an redy to give wen caled for. the brokers we se have had a metin an think they can restor yu child an bring us to justice—they mean wel to yu but they be actin under a great delusion—if they be friends to yu let them make the mony up which is the only thing can restor the child—if they will not do that yu drop them unless yu want to cut yu child's throat—if they want revenge let them git it after yu get yu child. this is a friendly advice do as yu think best—yu hear no more from us til we no yu mind—we have told yu that yu will se yu child again but it depends with yu an yu only in what condition you se him. We thought we would be ready to setle this bisines to-day but it must be delayed.

In this letter reference is made to articles which appeared in the newspapers, proposing that citizens should offer a reward. They say it would be a fatal mistake if the person should call for the money and I not be prepared to pay it, as it never would be called for a second time. They refer to the arrest made of a person, who they declare does not belong to their party, and reiterate the caution about having nothing to do with the detectives, and speak of the excitement in the city as being so great that it was almost impossible for

them to do anything. They speak of the demand made by some of the newspapers for the return of some articles that would determine with certainty that they really have CHARLEY, which they decline doing; but give some less hazardous evidences of his being in their possession. They speak of not wanting to keep the child any longer than to give me time to get the money, and acknowledge that they are disappointed in my pecuniary circumstances. They say they are about going from the city, and indicate the newspapers through which I can communicate with them, with the heading changed from Ross to C. R. R. They advise Mrs. Ross not to listen to Spiritualists, and refer to a meeting of brokers, who were at that time consulting about offering a reward for the arrest of the abductors and the restoration of the child, and close the letter by saying I will see my child again, but it depends upon my action if he will be dead or alive; lastly, that they are not ready to settle the business on this day, as they had agreed.

This letter indicates extreme caution on the part of the abductors. The intense excitement that prevailed in the city and throughout the country, they evidently felt to be no common outburst of passion, but a real, deep-felt purpose, indicating that no quarter would be given to the miscreants should they be discovered. This fear is also manifested by them, by their frequently warning me against taking advice of the detectives; and although an air of security is assumed, they plainly felt that they were treading on the brink of a dangerous precipice, and so failed to keep the appointment in not sending for the box.

It became very clear, after a few letters had been received, that no ordinary person devised the plot, and that it was being skillfully and cautiously worked up by a thoughtful and cool villain, apparently without a weak link or mistake of any kind.

Although the letters generally are of great length, often covering four sides of foolscap paper, written in a disguised hand, the only peculiarity discovered in the writing is in the formation of some of the letters, which are uniformly made wherever they occur, and indicate the usual way the writer formed them.

Mrs. Ross had been told that $20,000 was demanded, and ten hours was required after the money was paid before CHARLEY would be restored; also that the time had been appointed for the person to come for the money, and that the officers were detailed to remain in the house for our protection. This intensely increased her already great excitement, so that upon being suddenly aroused at night, not an unusual circumstance, she was much alarmed.

Arrangements were made by which the officers could secrete themselves, and yet be able to hear any conversation with persons at the door or inside the house, and at a signal they were at once to appear and arrest the person who should ask for the box.

About twelve o'clock one night we were awakened by a violent ringing of the bell, and supposed the messenger had come to get the box. The officers took their positions; Mrs. Ross stood on the landing at the head of the stairs agitated with fear, while I went to the door to invite whoever was there to come in. On opening the door, two strangers asked if this was my resi-

dence. I invited them to come in. One of them handed me his card, and stated that they both lived a distance off, and that the person who had accompanied him had some information which he thought might be of value, and he desired to tell me without any delay. He communicated what he had heard and seen, and they left, having caused much needless excitement.

My house, as well as my place of business, was visited by acquaintances and strangers who had suggestions to offer, information to give, or who came to extend their kind sympathies; and it seemed to me that every person, both in the city and from other places, whose mind was not well balanced, or who was a monomaniac upon any particular subject, found us out, and proposed his way of discovering CHARLEY, or of restoring him to us. Of course they all meant kindly, and their motives were accepted in the proper spirit.

Sunday seemed to be generally selected by these persons to call. During one afternoon three came to my home about the same time; one a German, who spoke very broken English. He said, "You lost your boy. If you show me the exact place the boy got into the wagon, I will surely bring him back to you within three days, either dead or alive." I thought the easiest way to dispose of him was to take him out on the lane, and show him as nearly as I could the place where the children had been taken into the wagon. "Here?" he said; "well, I bring him back to you in three days." How he intended doing it I did not inquire, nor have I heard from him since. Having got clear of him, I asked the second friend what he desired to say. He replied, "You cut off your hair and beard and your

child's hair. It's wrong. The Bible says you must not cut off the hair;" and in confirmation turning to a verse in the Bible in which the Nazarite is required to let his hair grow, he added, "God has punished you for cutting off your hair. He punished me, and two of my children died because I cut off my hair. You must not use razor or scissors, but let your hair grow, and all will be right. Your child will come back when your hair grows." "Well, my friend," I said, "if that is all you have to say, there is a lady waiting to see me: you will please excuse me."

The lady said she came from New York expressly to see me, felt deeply for my loss, and thought she could be of service to me; to which I replied I should like to know what information she had, or what she proposed doing. She began a history of her own and her husband's life; told me who she was, and where she lived in the city of New York, nothing of which was interesting to me; and expecting she might keep me the remainder of the day, I told her there was another person waiting to see me, and asked her to tell me as quickly as possible what she knew relating to the recovery of my little boy. After much hesitation, she said before her marriage she practised clairvoyance, and was considered an excellent medium; but having married a minister, on account of persons' prejudices, she did not think it proper to exercise her powers; but my loss being so peculiar, she would be glad to do what she could to fathom the mystery. "Well, madam," I replied, "I have no objection to a trial of your skill in whatever capacity you please; and certainly if you find the child, there will be some grounds for faith in your theory." She

left me, after exacting a promise that if she discovered where CHARLEY was and sent for me, I would go immediately where she directed; but I have not heard from her yet.

At another time two strangers, early in the morning, called at my place of business, and not finding me in, after a little hesitation told my brother that they knew where my little boy was secreted. Upon questioning them, he found they had no definite information; and suspecting they were fanatics, told them to bring the child home, and he would give them one thousand dollars. On leaving him they said they would go to Norristown and bring CHARLEY home that day. During the afternoon of the same day I received a telegram from Mrs. Ross as follows: "Come home quickly; good news." Without delay I hastened home and eagerly inquired for the good news. She said three men came to the house about two o'clock, and went directly to the stable and ordered the boy to harness the horse, telling him they were going for CHARLEY. The boy, supposing it was all right, commenced putting the horse to the wagon, when Mrs. Ross inquired who those men were? One of them whom she had seen in Germantown stepped forward and told her their object; at the same time, brandishing his pistols and knife, said: "We are well armed, and expect to have a hard fight for him." He said the other two men were friends of his from the city, and they were going to Norristown.

Suspecting that the two men were the persons who had been at my place of business in the morning, I asked her if they had taken the horse and wagon, to which she replied "Yes; but the boy went with them." I

then told her they were Spiritualists, if not worse. Her countenance at once indicated the great disappointment she felt; for she confidently believed they would surely come back with CHARLEY, and had telegraphed me that I might be at home when they returned.

They did not get back until after twelve o'clock at night, and the boy said he had driven them he did not know where. He only knew that they had called at a number of houses near Norristown, and under pretense of selling sewing machines had succeeded in getting into them, and at last they came to a house which they were told was occupied by Creegar, the counterfeiter. Then they were positive they would find the object of their search; and preparing themselves for a desperate fight, they aroused the old man and ransacked the house from the cellar to the garret. Finding no child in the house, they concluded to return, saying they must certainly have mistaken the direction that the spirits had indicated. Thus ended the exploit of these worthy knights of the knives and pistols.

Another instance of this class of persons was that of a man calling at the house, and asking permission of Mrs. Ross to try to bring CHARLEY back. She told him if he did no harm, he might do as he liked.

He went to the stable, followed by the children, and getting a carriage from the barn, took off a wheel, then went to get a small piece of wood from one of the posts at the entrance of the place; but finding they were of stone, he selected three spears of grass, which he said would answer his purpose. He then put these on the axle and replaced the wheel, and began turning it, at the same time reading from a book some prayers

or incantations. He told the children that at every revolution of the wheel, CHARLEY was being brought one mile nearer home.

For a time the novelty of the proceeding amused the children, but soon Walter wanted to examine more closely into the matter; gradually he approached the carriage, seeming much interested, until finally he attempted to climb into it, when suddenly the man exclaimed, "Now you have broken the spell: I cannot bring your brother home," and indignantly left.

The following morning he came again and commenced the same process, telling the children that he would have to take off each wheel, and afterwards drive off a short distance to get CHARLEY. He remained all the morning. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon, a friend drove into the yard, and finding the shed occupied as he thought by some person repairing the carriage, fastened his horse to a tree. Soon a very heavy shower came up, and my brother-in-law, seeing the horse and wagon standing in the rain, went to put them under shelter, and on opening the door of the stable, struck the carriage upon which the man was operating, at the same time accosting him with "What are you doing here?" The operator at once ceased, and said, "It is of no use for me to try any longer. The spell which I attempt to put on the persons who have the child is always broken." This was the last visit he paid us.

Knowing the interest taken in our calamity by persons wherever it had been heard of, we endeavored to give a respectful hearing to every one, although at times being subjected to great annoyances, as in the cases just mentioned.

A number of letters too were received from persons in different places, suggesting the kind of notes that should be obtained and given to the abductors, such as counterfeit money to be procured from the United States Treasury department, notes of large denominations of from $100 to $1,000 each, the numbers and letters of which should be registered, and private marks put on each note, and the banks and bankers in all cities to be furnished with memoranda of them, and to be requested to examine every note of like denomination that should be offered to them either for exchange or on deposit.

[The abductors in their letters carefully guarded against any strategems in transmitting the money, and did not propose to deliver up the child simultaneously with the receipt of the money; but required the advantage of five hours, afterwards extended to ten, for the purpose of giving them an opportunity of examining the money, in order to find out if it was good, and to see that there were no private marks on the notes, which were to be in denominations not exceeding tens, as well as to allow them time to return the child. In the event of any fraud being discovered, the life of the child was to be forfeited. See letters No. 6 & 7.]

Although the personal of July 14th was precisely as dictated in the previous letter, the kidnappers questioned whether it had been published in good faith; as they refer to editorials, which they interpreted as conveying the impression that the money was still to be collected; which, however, was not the case. The newspapers merely referred to the efforts then being made to offer a reward. The abductors dictated no answer to the last letter (No. 8); but closed the negotiation for the

time being by saying I should not hear from them again, until they knew my conclusions.

In the *Public Ledger* of July 21st, the following personal appeared:

C R R. Money is ready. How shall I know your agent?

On the following day an answer was received, dated Burlington, July 21st, postmarked Camden, N. J., July 22d, and reads as follows:

[No. 9. Burlington, July 21, 1874. Postmarked Camden, July 22, 1874.]

BURLINGTON, July 21.—*Ros.* yu statement in Monday Star is so conflictin with yu statement in this mornin personals that we are yet unable to comprehend yu nevertheless we wil act upon yu promise as if it was made by an angle. in monday Star yu say yu can have no faith in us neither do we have any faith in yu from the nature of this bisines it is to be presumed neither can have implicit confidence. the way this bisiness stands is this yu pay us the money yu are left without anything to bind us to our promis but our own word which yu say yu do not believe. then on what ground can we efect the change. we have seen yu own statement that yu would not comply with our terms an yet yu say (the money is redy how shal I no yu agent) the fact of us having yu child and you having paid us every dollar we demanded what further use could we have for him? He has answered the end for which we took him; this is one reason why we should give him up. The next reason is, if we should ever play the same game in any other part of the country, who would have any confidence in getin their child after they had paid the ransom if you should lose yu child we don't say we shal ever play this trick in this country again, for the popular outcry is a most to great. It has been stated that since the great outcry of the people that we would gladly surrender the child without a ransom. Do not deceive yuself on that, for we could set the child at liberty at any moment, but we never wil alive without the money, no never, never, never! Ros, in order to ever get yu child alive there is but one way left yu an that is the way we point out to yu. Yu must comply with our terms in every particular, and met our agent step by step as we instruct yu. If yu mean to act in faith to us yu can have no objection to this course. The fair an the faulce part is left with yu to chose, for it is with yu alone we shal presume to act an the life of Charley shal bind yu to yu word. do not deceive yuself an

think this is only to frighten yu. we appeal to the highest power exist on high to bear us witnes. (we solomly swear befor the twelve houses of heaven so sure as the sun rises in the east an sets in the west, so sure shall Charly die if yu brake yu promis with us an may the same curse fal upon us if we do not keep our promis with yu. Ros we want to caution yu stil more for this is a question involves the life or death of yu child. do yu desire to make a change of yu money for the child if yu are sincere take advice from us who yu think are yu worst enemies but in the end yu wil find we were yu best advisers the advice is that if yu want to regain yu child drop the police entirely have nothing to do with them while yu are transacting this bisines with us or the whole thing wil prove a failure an yu child must die if yu mean to ensare us then our advice is enlist al the power yu can invoke but be sure yu prove succesful for one false step seals the fate of yu child. We have told yu it is impossible to ensnare one of our friends. Do yu not believe us, or are yu wilin tu put the life of yu child at issue an test it with us. In all of our letters we have told yu the life of yu child shal be the bond that bind yu tu yu promise; any stratagem or false promise on yu part must an shall seal the fate of your child and you have none to blame for yu be his murderer an not us—for one false promise from yu we shal stop at nothing until we haveing given yu a prof that we can keep our word even unto blood. i repeat if yu want yu child yu comply with our terms in every particular. One false step on yu part will make yu and yu family weep tears of blood but if yu act in faith with us al wil go wel with yu. What have the authorities done towards findin yu child. They have done nothin yet and they are as far from his hidin place to-day as they were on the 6th day of July (yu money alone can find him) if these terms suit yu answer the followin in the *Ledger* personals.

C R R. i will agree to the terms in every particular.

P. S.—have the money ready as we described we wil send prof with him so yu can no him when he comes.

They call attention in this letter to statements in a newspaper, which they assume to be from me, and which conflict with the last personal; but that they will nevertheless act upon my promise. Allusion is made to the fact, that if they receive the money before the child is given up, I will have nothing but

their word to rely upon for the fulfillment of their promise. They reason that they would have no further use for the child after the money is paid, and it would be to their interest to return him; for by so doing, they would inspire confidence in other parents, should they steal another child. They fear, however, that the excitement which has been produced by this, their first attempt, will prevent their trying it again in this country. They assert very emphatically, that they never will set free the child without the money, and caution me again against permitting any interference by the police; and declare that if any treacherous step is made by me, the child shall be put to death, and that I will be his murderer. It seemed to me that in the previous letters everything had been said that could be expressed to terrify and alarm; yet in this letter it is declared that I will be the murderer of my own little son unless the demands of these cruel wretches be fully complied with. Every successive letter bears evidence of an effort to add some new pang, to intensify the anguish already inflicted, and to render me so desperate that I would willingly accede to anything they should demand.

The authorities realized that the whole country was looking to them to unravel the mystery, and night and day were in consultation with Mr. Bullitt, Mr. McKean and others, making almost superhuman efforts to detect something that would lead to the discovery of the abductors, and the place in which the child was concealed; yet not a thing was found out that gave the least possible clue to the parties.

The mayor of the city was called upon by a number

of citizens, and petitions were signed by many others, requesting him as chief magistrate of the city to offer rewards for the arrest of the perpetrators of the crime, and the recovery of the child, which he could not do without the authority of the city councils, and those bodies had not acted on the matter, and would not meet again until September.

A number of citizens then pledged themselves to the Mayor for the payment of the $20,000, and over his official signature the following advertisement was prepared July 22d, and published in the newspapers the following day. It was also printed on large bills, and posted in every conspicuous place in the city and surrounding country.

$20,000 REWARD FOR THE KIDNAPPERS.

MAYOR'S OFFICE,
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, *July 22, 1874.*

At the instance of the citizens of Philadelphia, I hereby offer a reward of Twenty thousand dollars for the arrest and conviction of the abductors of CHARLES BREWSTER ROSS, son of Christian K. Ross, of Philadelphia, and the restoration of that child to his parents. [Here follows a description of the child, horse and wagon, and the men, as already given.]

Signed, WILLIAM S. STOKLEY,
Mayor of Philadelphia.

While many persons in the cause of humanity were doing all in their power, it was believed that with the stimulus of this large reward thousands more would be induced to use all their powers of mind and body to work on the case, and that it would now be impossible for the criminals long to elude pursuit.

The chief of police also published a card, stating that neither the police nor the detective force would claim any part of the reward; but that it should all be paid to

whomsoever would give information that would lead to the discovery of the criminals and the child.

My fears, as expressed at the time, were that offering the reward for the abductors and the child would cause the kidnappers to become fugitives, and that they would take the child further away, when it would be more difficult to find either. We knew that the writer of the letters was in the city or very near to it, from the fact that the same day on which personals were published, answers were received. This supposition proved correct; for very soon they left our city, and removed the child further away, and required an increased time between the receipt of the money and the return of CHARLEY.

Aroused as the public had been, yet, when the Mayor's reward was published, the excitement became much greater; statements and rumors (many of them false) were caught up and magnified by newspaper reporters, and extra editions of papers were issued and sold by thousands. Letters containing information, suggestions, and reporting suspicious people and children that were supposed to resemble CHARLEY, began now to pour in—many of which are interesting, but will be reserved for subsequent chapters; and still we were no nearer the accomplishment of our daily and nightly wishes and prayers—

> "Lord, how long wilt thou look on?
> Rescue my soul from their destructions,
> My darling from the lions."

The words of the despairing Psalmist seemed literally to express the feelings of our hearts.

CHAPTER V.

LETTERS FROM ABDUCTORS CONTINUED. MEMORABLE TRIP TO ALBANY, N. Y.

THE following was dictated as the answer to the last letter:

C. R. R. "I will agree to the terms in every particular."

It appeared in the personal column of the *Ledger* of July 22d, and to it the following reply was received on the 24th:

[No. 10.]

PHILADELPHIA, July 24—Ros. we have seen yu reply in personal (yu agree to the terms in every particular) we accept yu offer for we consider yu fuly understand the great an momentus obligation yu place youself under when you assented tu this agreement. we be sory that we cannot effect the chang to-day. our creed is such that it forbids us to any bisines of this kind only at a certain quarter of the moon an the phace of the moon has just passed over so we have got tu wate one week befor we can transact any bisines between us. this delay may be a great sorce of torture tu yu but it cannot be avoided. we pledge ourselves in the mean time yu child shal not suffer for any thing only the close confinement which is necesary for his safe keepin. we have him so that we feel at ease against all the detective force in the country ever feritin him out. the authorities have offered $20,000 for the recovery of the child an detection of us if they had yu interest at hart this would be the worst thing they could do. this is only oferin a reward for the sacrifice of yu child, We told yu at the beginin that yu child could never be takin from us a live that he was so situated that we could destroy him in one instant. an forever out of al prof against us but yu seam to have no faith in our word. nevertheless yu have nothin to fear on that point for he can never be found by any detective force. neither can any reward no matter how large be any temptation to us to peach one on the

other foi we are sworn an blood bound unto death tu never give each other away. Ros. one week must intervene befor we can negotiote for the restoration of Charley by that time there will be an $100,000 reward yu will se by that time the detectives can avail yu nothin or yu wil se that we spak trought from the beginin. that there was no earthly hope left yu only in payin the ransom in good faith an then yu get yu child. what we mean in good faith is tu set no trap. We no it is not posible for yu to trap us. but by any stratigem on yu part or connivance it wil thwart our perposes an the money wil never come to us. if this result takes place through any act or connivance of yuse then yu lose yu (child forever.) If yu do as we instruct yu an this money gits lost (it shal be our los and not yuse) an yu shall git yu child just as if we got the mony. no matter what our instruction is for yu to do with the mony yu do it an yu child shal be restored to yu. if we tel yu to burn it up do so, if we tel yu to throw it off the dock do so, if we tel yu to give it to any one do so, an yu child wil be restored yu wether the mony gits lost or not through any act of ours. Ros. the whole contract is sumed up in these words. yu pay us the mony in good faith in denominations from 1s to 10s in U. S. notes an no private marks fixed on them, then we consider yu have fulfilled yu part and yu shal have yu child restored safe to yu. if we do not fulfil our part in good faith to yu, we invoke the vengeance of hell, if there be an hell, to be our eternal portion. we have told yu that we wil transact this bisines with yu and yu friends only. we know a true friend wil not advise yu rong if he has the interest of yu child at heart we shall no nothing about detectives in the bisines if yu cal them in for advice or asistance it wil be at the peral of yu child's life for in their eigerness to arrest us, which they never can do, they will surely be the means of sacrificing yu child. we shal never cal on yu but once for the mony so it is yu part to have it at a minute's notice. but yu have plenty of time yet. due notice wil be given yu when to have it at hand (we request no answer tu this) till yu hear from us again which perhaps wil be one week. in the meantime yu and yu family console youself that yu child is wel an safe tu yu. an to us against al detective power. nothin surprised us more after we had told yu the imposibility of findin the child an the risk it wold be tu the child's life tu find his hidin place yet yu in disregard of this advise persisted in havin the detectives search for him. time wil tel yu that we do not lie in every word we write. the reward signifies nothin, with us wether it be $20,000 or $20,000,000 it wil accomplish nothin with us an the authorities wil fail on that point tu

bribe one of us as yu wil se in the end of this bisines. Ros our word for it no harm shal befal yu child intentionaly til yu hear from us again 7 days by that time yu must be prepared for his ransom if yu ever expect him alive. Ros mark the selfishness of Mr. Stokley an his committe of brokers what do they say. not one cent for ransom but millions for conviction. do they have yu interest at heart. no it is a selfish motive. they are wilin to sacrifice yu child that theirs be safe. why do they not pay their mony to have yours restored first, an then offer a reward for our conviction.

In this letter the writer cautiously professes to rely on the statement made in the last personal, and postpones the exchange for one week, stating by way of excuse that the moon is not at a phase for the propitious transaction of such business. This delay he knows will torture me, but is unavoidable. In the meantime they pledge themselves that CHARLEY shall not suffer, except from the confinement necessary for his safe keeping.

Of the reward of twenty thousand dollars offered for the recovery of the child and the arrest of the abductors, he says that it will avail nothing in the accomplishment of either object, and that they are sworn and blood-bound not to inform on each other. The ransom alone will cause them to restore CHARLEY; ten times twenty thousand dollars offered as a reward will not influence them to change their plan; yet they intimate that the reward should have been divided, part of it for the child and the remainder for their arrest, and say that the reward as offered is intended for the protection of others, and not for the object of recovering my son. They affirm that if by any stratagem on my part the money should fail to reach them, the child will be *killed;* but if by any fault of theirs it should be lost, CHARLEY will surely be restored. They invoke the ven-

geance of hell if they should not fulfil their contract. They again specify that the money is to be in United States notes of denominations of ones to tens, without private marks of any kind, and reiterate their former warnings against permitting the detectives to interfere in any way. The cruel threatenings are repeated in case any deception is attempted, or any treacherous movement is made.

It was supposed that some superstition had influenced them in delaying the exchange on account of the moon having passed a certain quarter; but the reason for the delay was apparent on the night subsequently fixed for obtaining the money.

It is clearly stated that in pursuance of a prearranged plan the child was to be restored only on receipt of the ransom, and that no reward would induce them to change this plan, their purpose being to pursue the business of child-stealing; hence they employed this cruel threatening, to force a compliance with their demands, which would not have been necessary had they been willing to accept a reward.

There is, however, in this letter one solace—they say that the child is well, and that he shall not suffer for anything. My recollection goes back to the night after receiving this letter, when on arriving home I was asked by my wife whether I had heard anything of CHARLEY during the day. With an attempt at cheerfulness, yet with a heart full of solicitude for the future, I replied, yes, he is alive and well, and not suffering for anything. Her countenance lighted up with an expression that indicated the happiness she felt on hearing of her dear

boy, and gratitude to God for having thus far spared his life. But the feeling of anxiety that was, and is still ever present with her, lest CHARLEY should be maltreated, or become sick, none but a mother can comprehend, a mother whose child has been torn from her by creatures devoid of mercy.

No answer was required to the last letter, but I was instructed to be ready at a minute's warning to obey whatever the writer might enjoin.

On July 28th the next letter was received, and is as follows:

[No. 11. Collected at Second and Arch streets.]

PHILADA., July 28.—Ros are yu not convinced by this time that the detectives can render yu no service whatever. are yu agoing let them keep yu under the delusion that they can yet recover yu child an bring us to justice. we tel yu the thing is imposible we fear them not—neither do we fear they wil ever find Charley until we find him for yu. We se in the personals that Mr. Percll a milionaire of New York offers to pay the required amount to redeem yu child an ask no questions, but we have no confidence in him neither would we treat with him if he offered one milion in hand an no questions asked. in the transaction of this bisines we are determined to no no one but yu, an if yu suffer these letters to go out of yu hands so that they can personate yu in effectin this change we shal hold the child subject to the fulfillment of yu promise an one fals step by yu or by any one acting for yu, yu may consider the bisenes is at an end, an the trap has sprung that render further negotiation useles to yu. At the end of this week must end this biseness; it must place him in yu hands safe an sound or must place him in the grave; it is left entirely with yu. if yu have not the mony to redeem him an ask for an extension of time we wil keep him for yu but under no other circumstances we wil not. We are not afraid to keep him for we set the whole force at defiance to find his hidin place. No matter how grate the reward is, it signifies nothin with us—they are goin to search every house in the city. we wil give yu the satisfaction to tel you he is not in the city nor ever has been since the day he left home, nor he never wil be again unles we return him to yu for the ransom, we wil give you the satisfaction

of knowin that he is within 100 miles of this city an yet we defy al the devels out of hell to find him. we tel yu sincerely we have prepared this place for every emergency an it is death for yu to find him while he is in our custody. we teld yu in our last letter we could not transact any business for one week. we are now prepared to effect the change as soon as yu be redy, but under no circumstances say yu be redy when yu be not able to put yu hand on it, an hand it out. rest assured if our agent cals for it an he does not get it without waiting, he will never come again an the our of redemption is forever gone by with you. from you former promises we take it as granted that yu be agoin to redeem yu child in good faith, it is unnecessary therefore to repeat the consequences of any perfidey or fals step on yu part. we teld yu to put the mony in a box, but we now tel yu to put the mony in a strong, white, leather valise, locked an double straped an be prepared to give it or take it wherever we direct yu. if yu are directed to cary it yuself yu may take al the friends yu pleas with yu—but dont let the cops know yu bisines nor go with yu unles yu want the bisines to turnout a failure. if yu want to trap take the whole force with yu an then be sure yu know what yu be doin—for we know what we be doin. this is al the caution necesary for yu to save yu child alive. if you can have all things ready as we have directed yu by thursday the 30th insert the *folowin in the ledger* personal (John—it shall be as you desire on the 30th.) Ros you may fix any other date that is convenient for you. Ros yu have sed yu had no confidence in these men an would not do as they requested yu. now we say yu must do as we request yu, or there is no earthly hope left yu to save yu child alive. this is the only alternitive given yu an yu wil find we are prepared for every emergency. detection is impossible if yu do not ransom him, he must die. if yu attempt to arrest any of our agents, he must die. If yu fail to comply with the terms after promising—he must die.

This letter begins with the oft-repeated caution not to depend on the detectives to discover either the child or his captors. It alludes to an advertisement that appeared in one of the New York newspapers, in which the confederates place no confidence, and admonish me not to allow their letters to be used by any one for the purpose of effecting an exchange, as they will recognize no other person than myself, and reiterate their purpose

that the life of the child shall be held subject to the faithful fulfillment of the promises. The end of the week is appointed to close the business, but an extension of time is promised if I desire it.

The abductors notice the general search for the child in the houses of the city, and say he is neither in the city now, nor has he been since the day he was taken from his home, and never will be again unless they return him for the ransom; they further say that he is within 100 miles of this city, and yet defy men and devils to find him.

They distinctly declare that the plan was formed for every emergency, and it would be death to the child should he be discovered while in their keeping. They announce their readiness to make the exchange, and wait my answer, repeating the consequences of any deception on my part, and requiring the money to be put in a valise instead of a box, with another caution as to the detectives. They direct a personal to be inserted in the *Ledger* of July 30th, with the heading changed from C. R. R. to John, and close the letter by repeating the threats that the child must die unless I ransom him, or if any of their agents be arrested.

Additional evidence is given in this letter that the plot had been arranged previous to the abduction, and that the place in which the child was to be secreted had been selected, and every precaution taken to prevent a surprise. This accounts for the boldness which they assumed in the first letter, and which continued to be expressed in every succeeding letter. It was evident that the abductors read attentively all that was published

about the matter in the daily papers of this city and in New York, as they frequently make quotations from them, and in a number of their letters they refer to editorials that conflict with their plan of working out the case.

The last letter was received on Tuesday, and the time appointed for the exchange was the end of the week. No intimation was given where or how it would be effected, but the money was to be taken from the box and put in a white leather valise, which was to be locked and doubled strapped, thus indicating that a trip to a distant place would be proposed.

Captain Heins, with the gentlemen who had volunteered to assist in unravelling the mystery, and who had been deeply interested in the case, strained every nerve, sparing no labor, time nor expense, in endeavoring to discover a clue to the abductors and the child. Disappointed in one direction they all, as one man, immediately turned to look elsewhere. They suffered no suspicious person, nor the most minute circumstance, to pass without being patiently and thoroughly investigated. Baffled as they had been, they were yet hopeful that their efforts would meet with ultimate success.

The enormity of the crime, and the stimulus of so large a reward, made every one vigilant to observe all suspicious people; and persons who were traveling with a child thought to resemble the description of CHARLEY, were closely watched by the employees at the various railroad depots, by conductors of trains, as well as by travelers occupying the cars. A number of instances of this kind occurred, and were reported by passengers

on trains on different roads, but generally too late to trace them up. Yet, in some cases, persons were detained until it was decided that the child they had with them was not my CHARLEY.

A lady of this city with a child having long, light curly hair, light complexion, about five years old, and not unlike CHARLEY in appearance, was in the cars at the West Philadelphia depot, en route for Massachusetts. Before the train started some of the passengers, supposing the child was mine, spoke of it to others waiting in the depot. Very soon a crowd of several hundred persons collected, and insisted that the officer on duty at the depot must exert his authority, and detain them until the child could be seen by a member of my family. The officer told the lady he was obliged to take her and the child to the Central Police Office, that the people thought she had CHARLEY ROSS with her. She accompanied him, followed by a few persons, who reported to others they met that my little boy had been found, and that they were on their way to the Central Office to have him identified. Soon after their arrival at the office an excited crowd collected, anxious to know the result. Happening to call at the Central Office shortly after their arrival, I at once comprehended the situation, and asked the lady if the child she had with her was supposed to be my CHARLEY? She replied in the affirmative. I answered immediately, he is not my son, but he bears a very striking resemblance to him; he is too large, and is certainly older than CHARLEY. The lady then said, before leaving home she had taken the precaution to change the child's clothing from

a linen suit to a dark one, as she feared difficulty on the way to her destination, having been informed that her child had a very striking resemblance to the picture of my little son, but was glad that they had been stopped where she had friends who knew both herself and the child. In order to avoid any further trouble, she asked that a paper should be given her certifying that the child was not CHARLEY ROSS, which the Chief of Police cheerfully gave her, signed by him and myself, and to which the seal of the city was attached. She left the office in charge of an escort, followed by a curious crowd, and apparently pleased that she could feel safe from further annoyance on her journey.

Another instance occurred in Allentown, Pennsylvania. I received a letter from a person who, from information obtained from a depot-master, wrote that a man having a little boy with long curly hair and light complexion had arrived by rail at that place; that he had the child's hair cut off and had ordered a suit of new clothes for him; that the man seemed reserved and prevented the child from talking with any one, and that he had gone away the same night, but in about a week afterwards had returned. He was a stranger, and his whole manner was suspicious. A letter was also received by the Chief of Police from a different person, giving similar information, adding further that the people believed the child to be CHARLEY ROSS.

The Chief sent Lieut. Crout of the Reserve Police Force to investigate the matter. When the Lieutenant arrived in Allentown, he learned that this man with the child had been permitted to go away; but getting a trace of him, he followed in pursuit, telegraphing from

station to station and making inquiry for the party. For two days he was unsuccessful in obtaining any information, and then having learned that the man and child had crossed the mountains, he obtained a conveyance, determined to overtake them. He stopped at every village to inquire if they had been seen, and soon found persons who had seen the man and child, and who in describing the child said he was not more than two years old, and had blue eyes. The same report being confirmed by different persons, some even putting the age of the child at less than two years, the Lieutenant, satisfied that he could not be CHARLEY, abandoned the pursuit. The same man and child were afterwards detained at Harrisburg and Pittsburgh. He now took up the trail of another party of whom he accidentally heard at a small village in Luzerne county, Pa. He was informed of a gipsy party that had been encamped near the town, and who had with them a child of a fair complexion, that they kept closely concealed in a covered wagon; he also learned that they had gone in the direction of Danville. Immediately securing the aid of a person familiar with the country, he went in pursuit of the gipsies, who, on arriving at Danville, he found had gone towards Pottsville two days before. The Lieutenant telegraphed a description of the party to the authorities of all the towns between Danville and Pottsville, and to those of Pottsville, asking them to detain the gipsies until he could reach them.

The Chief of Police in Pottsville discovered that they were in Hamburg, a village near Reading, and at once telegraphed to the authorities of that place to hold them, as it was suspected that they had CHARLEY ROSS with

them. They were arrested, and before Lieut. Crout reached Hamburg, a telegram was sent to Philadelphia, saying "A party having CHARLEY ROSS is detained here." The news spread rapidly through the city. People became almost wild with a new excitement. Bulletin boards were surrounded; Chestnut and Market streets were thronged; crowds of people surrounded the Central Police Office, and my place of business was besieged by an excited multitude; men hurried from their places of business inquiring the latest news, and the countenances of all were animated with joyful expectation. "Extras" were issued, and newsboys ran through the streets crying out "CHARLEY ROSS is found," and disposed of their papers as rapidly as they could hand them out.

The report was telegraphed to the different places of summer resort, and telegrams came from all points inquiring if the rumor was true.

Mr. Joseph Jones, Vice President of the Reading Railroad, dispatched a special train in which Kennard H. Jones, Chief of Police, and my wife's brother, Joseph W. Lewis, were rapidly conveyed to Hamburg.

Having been disappointed so often, I was not sanguine that the child was CHARLEY, and endeavored to maintain as much calmness as possible; yet it was impossible not to partake of the feeling of hope so universally manifested.

Hamburg is about two hours from Philadelphia, and the time seemed long for the train to reach its destination. While there was everywhere expressed hope that CHARLEY was found, low mutterings were uttered indicating that the wretches who had committed the act

would not and should not be protected by the officers; and a crowd gathered around the railroad depot who were not slow to express their determination as to what they purposed doing on the arrival of the train.

About 2 o'clock a message was received—"*Wrong*. Not CHARLEY." The disappointment to the sympathizing public really seemed greater than it was to those most deeply interested; for the people had not suffered the disappointments already common to us, nor did they appreciate how easily mistakes are made in identity.

At Hamburg, Chief Jones and Mr. Lewis found an excited crowd in and near the railroad depot waiting their arrival; they were at once conducted to the room in which were the so-called gipsies, and Mr. Lewis at once announced that the child "is not CHARLEY," and that he did not bear the slightest resemblance to him. Shortly after their departure from Hamburg, Lieutenant Crout arrived from Pottsville, and was surprised to learn that the party he had been following for days had been the cause of so great an excitement. He was somewhat chagrined that a message had been sent to Philadelphia before his arrival, as he believed he could have decided the matter, so as to have avoided the furor that had so greatly disturbed the city.

The excitement of the day had not passed away ere I received the following letter in reply to a personal in the *Ledger* of July 30th:

[PERSONAL.]

"John, It shall be as you desire on the 30th."

[No. 12.]

PHILADELPHIA, July 30.—*Ros:* from yu answer this day you signify everything is redy. everything is redy with us. we now give yu a wide margin for preparation to make an arest if yu be pleased to do

your actions this day desides CHARLEY's fate it is left with yu alone wether he shall live or die. we caution once, an the last time do not think we are trifling. Ros. you are to take the 12 P. M. train to-night from West Philadelphia for New York. it arrives at New York 5.05 A. M. take a cab at Cortland or Disbrossers streets, N. Y., an ride directly to the grand central station at 4 avenue and 42d streets. take the 8 A. M. northern express by way of hudson river (take notice) you are to stand on the rear car and the rear platform from the time you leave west phila depot until arrive at jersey city—you are then to stand on the rear platform of hudson river car from the time yu leave the grand central at New York until yu arrive at Albany. if our agent do not meet yu befor yu arrive in Albany yu wil find a letter in post office at Albany addressed to C. K. Walter directing yu where yu are then to go. Ros—the probability is yu may not go one mile before our agent meets yu and yet yu may go 250 miles before he intercepts you but be it where it may yu must be prepared to throw the valise to him regardless of all risks. the risk of being lost we assume an yu get your child without fail. these are the signals: if it be dark the moment the rear car passes him he wil exhibit a bright torch in one hand an a white flag in the other hand but if it be light he wil ring a bell with one hand and a white flag in the other hand. the instant yu see either of these signals yu are to drop it on the track an yu may get out at the next station, if the cars continue on their course we consider yu have kept your word, and yu child shal be returned yu safe but if they stop to arrest our agent then your child's fate is sealed. this letter ends all things in regard to the restoration of yu child.

In this letter the announcement is made that everything is ready for the exchange, and a fair opportunity will be afforded for an arrest. They assert that to-day will decide CHARLEY'S fate, and I must not think that they are trifling. A journey is marked out; the hour of starting is fixed. The detail of the plan by which they expected to get the money is revealed, and the letter is closed by a caution, saying that if by any opposition on my part the plan should be defeated, the consequences must rest with me.

It will be observed, that in this letter the effort to

Phil July 30

Bros— from your annunciation this day you signify every thing is ready— every thing is ready with us— we now give you a week— margin for preparation to make ab arrest— it will please us to do so— your actions this day decides charley fate— it is left with you alone neither had that line or die— we caution once on the last time do not think we are trifling

Bros— you are to take the 12 p.m. train to night from West. Phila. for New York— arrives at New York 5.05 A.M.— take a cab at Cortlandt or Desbrosses Sts New York an ride directly to the grand central station at 4. Ave and 42nd. Street— take 8.00 A.M. northern express by way of Hudson river [redacted] (take Notice) you are to stand on the rear car and the rear plat form, from the time you leave west Phila depot until you arrive at jersey city— you are then to stand on the rear platform of hudson river cars from the time you leave the grand central at New York until you arrive at Albany— if our agent do not meet you before you arrive in Albany you will find a letter in post office at albany addressed to C.K Walter directing you where you are then to go— Bro— the probability is you may not go one mile before our agent meets you and yet you may go 250 miles before he intercepts you but be it where it may you must be prepared to throw the police to him regardless of all risks— the risk of being lost we assume on you

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Reduced Fac-Simile of Letter Number Twelve.

get your child without fail —
— these are the signals —
if it be dark at the moment the rear car
passes him he will exhibit a bright torch in
one hand or a white flag in the other hand
but if it be light he will ring a bell with
one hand and a white flag in the other
hand — the instant you see either of these
signals you are to drop it on the track an
you may get out at the next station —
if the cars continue on their course
we consider you have kept your word
an. your child shall be returned you safe
but if they stop to arrest our agent then
your child's fate is sealed —
this letter ends all things in regard to
the restoration of yr child

Reduced Fac-Simile of Letter Number Twelve.

spell the words wrong is not adhered to, and with the exception of words of from two to three letters, the spelling is generally correct. It will also be noticed how specifically the directions are given, and yet how concisely; nothing being omitted, nothing superfluous. July 30th, 1874, came on Thursday; the letter was received about four o'clock in the afternoon, and arrangements were to be made during the afternoon and evening as to what action should be taken on the letter. Greatly agitated, as my reader may readily imagine, I took the letter to Mr. McKean, and following his advice, a meeting of the following persons, Mr. W. V. McKean, John C. Bullitt, Captain Wm. R. Heins, Detective Wood, F. D. Lewis, and myself, was held in the evening at Mr. Bullitt's office, to consult together regarding the letter.

At the meeting every one felt that a crisis had arrived, and that a point had been reached where positive action was demanded. The time for consultation was short; it was difficult to determine what course to pursue; but after an interchange of opinions, it was unanimously agreed that I must go as directed in the letter, and that advantage must be taken of this opportunity to reach the abductors with a letter containing a clear statement of my position, and demanding a more direct mode of communicating with them than was possible through the personals of a newspaper. It was thought best that my nephew, F. D. Lewis, and an officer in citizen's dress, should go with me on this fearful trip, which appeared to be fraught with such momentous consequences.

A letter having been prepared was put in the valise,

and a copy fastened to the outside of it. The letter is as follows:

PHILADELPHIA, *July 30, 1874.*

Sir:—Your letter of this date is received. I am anxious to end the suffering and suspense of the terrible four weeks that I have just passed through, but I am compelled to tell you that I cannot throw away twenty thousand dollars on the wild plan you suggest. It is a plan where all the chances are on your side, and I have not the smallest assurance that I will ever get my dear child into my possession again. It is impossible for me to give you twenty thousand dollars ($20,000), and trust to you to bring me my child at some subsequent time. I desire to act with you in good faith, but as your whole correspondence leads me strongly to suspect deception, I must insist upon having some positive, tangible proof that you have the child, and that after receiving this I must in some way and at some place suggested by you, meet either you or yours and see that you have my child in my presence, so that I may take him simultaneously with your receiving the money. I shall look for a letter from you in Philadelphia in answer to this.

I have come here in response to your call with a friend (not an officer) as suggested by you in your letter of 28th instant, and in so doing have complied so far as a reasonable man can with your plan. I cannot give you one cent until I see my child before me. It is my purpose, as I have said, to act in good faith; but I must, before going further, receive every assurance which can possibly be given me, first, that you have the child, and second, that his delivery to me will be simultaneous with the delivery of the money to you.

I will add that the public mode I have used in compliance with your suggestions of answering your letters is not satisfactory to me, as it informs the police and everybody else of what we are doing. We must have some better mode of communication. C. K. ROSS.

Arrangements for the trip having been completed, my nephew and myself left Mr. Bullitt's office at 11:30 for the New York depot, where we were joined by the officer, and by the courtesy of the superintendent of trains on the Pennsylvania railroad, permission was granted me to occupy the platform of the last car of the train.

At 12 o'clock, midnight, the train moved off. The

moon was full, not a cloud was to be seen; objects could be discerned almost as clearly as in the full light of the sun, and we now understood the reason why the moon was not in the right quarter "to transact the business," as stated in the letter of July 24th. A night was selected when the moon would be full, to enable their confederate to see if they were being watched, as well as to see the valise when it would be dropped from the car. In the letter of July 30th, it was expressly mentioned that the probability was that I should not have to go one mile before I might see the signal, and yet I might have to go the 250 miles. These instructions necessarily kept me on the look-out from the moment I left the depot in West Philadelphia until I arrived in Albany, New York.

As the train dashed rapidly along, my attention was attracted by every pile of wood, and bank of earth, and bush, and post, and building, along the road, in the expectation of seeing some one jumping out from his hiding place displaying the torch and flag, the signal for the valise to be thrown from the car. This of course kept up a painful flutter of anxiety over the whole route —for five mortal hours my brain and eyes were in a fixed agony.

To guard against any attempt being made to take the valise from me at any of the stations along the road, the officer, before the train came to a full stop, came out of the car on the platform, and as the train moved on again resumed his seat, leaving me alone until the next station was approached. The singularity of my position was commented on by those who saw me, and the servant who had charge of the car (a sleeping car) said:

"That man must have a pile of money in that valise: he has been standing there ever since we left the depot in Philadelphia, and he has two men with him to guard him." We arrived in New York about five o'clock in the morning, without having seen any signal whatsoever. There was not time, after it was determined that I must make the trip, to change my clothing, or to even procure an overcoat, so that the dense mist which arose from the swamps of New Jersey saturated my light flannel suit, and I had become thoroughly wet and chilled, and being greatly fatigued by holding fast to the railing, lest I should be thrown from the car, and being worn out from standing so long a time, I was truly thankful when we reached Jersey City.

Crossing the river, we took a carriage at Desbrosses street and were driven at once to the Grand Central depot, as instructed in the last letter. At eight o'clock the same morning, we took the train via Hudson River railroad for Albany. Again I took my position on the rear platform of the last car, and being somewhat refreshed by a rest of about two hours, the first fifty miles was traveled without any feeling of fatigue. But about eleven o'clock the heat of the sun became oppressive; the wind whirled the dense smoke from the engine backwards into my face, and the dust made by the train thundering along enveloped me in a continuous cloud, and yet my object was to look, watch, see, and act *on the instant.* The railroad following the tortuous course of the Hudson River, as every one who has traveled on it knows, is very crooked, with many short curves at close intervals, so that with the valise in one hand, and with the other hand firmly grasping the railing of the

car, it was more and more difficult as I became more and more exhausted, to maintain my hold on the platform of the car. The valise had now become as heavy as lead, although it contained nothing but the letter that was designed to reach the abductors: and I became so wearied out that, after standing on one foot and then on the other, after changing the valise from one hand to the other and then back again, after taking every possible position consistent with an approach to comfort, I felt that I *must* give up, and sit down in the car; but the constant thought was present with me, "If you do, you will miss the signal." And yet a greater strain was on my brain than on my body, to say nothing of the dead weight upon my heart.

As the train wound along around hill, bank and tree, each instant that a railroad flagman appeared waving his white or red flag, as a signal to the passing train, I involuntarily braced myself to throw off the valise. So swiftly sped the train that there was but an instant to decide whether the man had a bell or not, and momentarily I was on the point of dropping the valise. Notwithstanding the necessity of keeping a constant lookout, and in spite of the fact that a few moments' inattention might render the whole expedition void, I was more than once on the point of giving up, from utter inability to keep my feet. And when Albany came in sight, I was so glad and thankful that, for the moment, I lost a sense of the disappointment, which soon after returned to me with aggravated intensity. Begrimed with smoke and dust, I arrived in Albany about one o'clock, without seeing the man waving a white flag in one hand and ringing a bell with the other—the signal

which the writer of the letter stated I should see on this memorable trip. As soon as we had dinner we inquired at the post-office for a letter addressed to C. K. Walter, according to the instructions in the letter, in case the signal was not seen before reaching Albany. Not getting a letter during that day, we remained there until the following morning. I was so thoroughly fatigued by the trip and exhausted by the continuous strain on my nervous system, that when in the afternoon I attempted to rest, it was impossible for me to remain quiet, and to change the current of my thoughts I walked over the city the remainder of the day.

We left Albany for home the following morning (Saturday) at ten o'clock, A. M., after having called at the Albany post-office a number of times and failed to get a letter, and arrived in Germantown about seven o'clock the same evening.

During our absence the following letter was received at my place of business:

[No. 13.]

PHILA 31 July.—*Ros:* Yu seem to have no faith in us whatever. we told yu to be at yu store on thursday and this bisines would be all settled up but yu seem to pay no attention to it. at the time we supposed yu wer gitin redy to effect the change yu were as the *Evening Star* stated on you way to potsvill to see some child there. if yu ever expect to git yu child yu must look to us and no one else for there is no other existin powers that can restore him we have told yu to let the detectives take their own way an do as they pleas for they wil do yu no good and we don't think they can do much harm if yu had done as the last letter instructed you and let the potsvill affair alone yu would now have the plasure of seeing yu child safe at home after we had seen that yu had gone to potsvill we did not instruct our agent to meet yu from the fact we thought it was no use. if yu are trifling with us yu wil find we are not the right party to be trifled with but if yu mean squar bisines with us although we are perhaps the worst men in the world we wil act honorably with yu in this affair. we

told yu the last letter was the only one yu should ever reseive from us an we would keep our word but we are inclined to think yu did not get it befor yu started for potsvill. to save yu al further trouble an vexation in runing around to false reports that yu child is found here, and found there, we tel yu candidly that yu child is not in the possession of any woman or family or that his hair is cut off short. to save yu further troble pay no attention to any telegrams of that description for it is only trouble in vain for yu. your childs hair is the same length that it ever was an there is no disfigurement whatever in him but he is kept where no human eye can behold him yu have expressed the opinion that we would git tired of keeping him an turn him over to some charitable institution. dont flatter yurself with such an idea we have told yu what his end is, if yu do not redeem him we shal never digress from that. he wil never be taken from the place he is now concealed unless he is brought out to be restored to yu. Ros. if yu want to redeem yu child yu must come to us. you can reach us through the personals of the *Ledger* or *Evening Star*. our address is John. a change can be easily accomplished if yu desire it. remember yu have our word in 10 ours the whole thing shall be consummated yu git yu child an we git the money

In this letter they accuse me of a lack of faith in them, because they saw it stated in a newspaper that I had gone to Pottsville to see a child on the day they had fixed to get the money, and in consequence did not instruct their agent to meet me; and say that although they did not intend writing to me again, yet they think I may not have received the last letter before starting for Pottsville.

They say (to prevent further trouble to me in looking after children) that CHARLEY is not in possession of a woman or of any family, that his hair has not been cut off, and that he has not been disfigured, but is kept where no human eye can behold him, and that he will not be handed over to any charitable institution; also that he will never be taken from the place in which he is now concealed, unless he is brought out to be restored to me; and they close by indicating the papers

through which I can address them, and pledge themselves that in ten hours the whole matter can be ended —that is, they can have the money and I the child.

It was stated in one of the early editions of an afternoon paper that I had gone to Hamburg to see the child that was detained in that place; but this was a mistake, and was corrected in the later papers.

The route as marked out by the abductors was rigidly and faithfully followed, and it was with no little disappointment that I received the above letter, which continued the suspense in which I had been kept, and which, by again repeating the cruel threatenings, with the addition that CHARLEY was so closely confined as not to be seen by any one, aggravated the suffering which I was already enduring.

The next day, Sunday, after my return from Albany, my nephew and I went to the city to learn if anything had been found out while we were absent. The letter from the abductors had been received on Saturday and was given to us to read; and the following personal was prepared at the residence of Mr. John C. Bullitt, who, with Mr. W. V. McKean and Captain Heins, had met my nephew and myself, to hear our report of the trip to Albany, and to confer together as to what further should be done. The following personal was prepared, and appeared in the *Ledger* on Monday morning, August 3d:

"John, your directions were followed, you did not keep faith. Point out some sure and less public way of communicating either by letter or person."

The abductors in their last letter indicated the way they proposed to get the money, and their instructions

were followed out; but as they failed to perform their part of the agreement, they did not get the letter in the valise, and therefore it was deemed best to re-open the correspondence immediately.

The personal was prepared to inspire them with confidence that I had acted in good faith by obeying their instructions, and at the same time reflecting on the failure to carry out their part of the contract.

It also embodied the main object of our letter, which was to get into more direct and closer communication with them.

On the 4th of August an answer came to hand, which is as follows:

[No. 14. Received August 4, 1874, in the morning.]

PHILA. Aug, 3.—Ros—in not keepin our apointment with yu was entirely a mistake from the fact of havin seen a statement in evening star that yu had gone to potsvill on the day you was to setle this bisines with us. we saw the mistake but not in time to communicate with our agent or to notify yu not to go as we directed yu. Yu say yu want us to point out some sure way by which this money can be transmited to us—of course we can not call on yu personaly neither can we receive it by letter. Ros—We will make the followin proposition to yu and if yu comply with the terms propounded we wil settle this bisines in very quick time satisfactory to both parties concerned so far as the restoration of your child is concerned. We assure yu that yu child is now well and in as good health as when he left yu home—do yu consent to the followin proposition and stake the life of Charley on the faith of yu promise.

Proposition 1st. Yu wil hand the box with the amount in to our agent when he calls to yu store.

Proposition 2d. Yu wil hand him the box, ask him no questions—not folow him—not put any one to folow him—not tel him what the box contains—not notify the detectives so they can folow him—not do anything that wil interupt its transit to us.

Do yu agree to the first and second proposition while we hold the life of Charley to bind yu to yur promise. Remember when yu promise

your word is life or death to yu child. If yu consent to these terms answer the folowing in *Ledger* or *Evening Star* to save time. (John i agree to the 1st and 2d propositions.) The reason we have warned yu in al our letters about the detectives to keep them ignorant of this compromise bisines is not that we fear detection but we now they wil interfear and baffle us from receiving the money and yu from giting yu child. we told yu in our last this corrospondonce must end but it was a mistak on our part therefor we be wilin to give yu a fair opportunity to redeem yu son if you wil. when our agent call on yu he will give yu a symbol of which yu wil previously receive a facsimilar so there wil be no posibly mistake in him, if there be it shal be our loss and not yours providing yu do as instructed. if we lose the money through our agent yu get yu child just as if we got every dollar.

Here the abductors say they were misled by the statement in the newspaper that I had gone to Pottsville, and did not discover it in time to notify me or to communicate with their agent. They misconstrued part of the last personal, and declare that CHARLEY is in as good health as he was when he was taken from his home. They make two propositions to which they ask my assent, and present another way to obtain the money, again warning me against permitting the detectives interfering to prevent the money reaching them, and say that the life of the child is suspended on the faith of my word. The person whom they will send for the box will be furnished with a symbol of which they will send me a fac-simile, to prevent any mistake being made in recognizing the proper messenger; and say that if I follow their instructions and any loss occurs through their agent, the child will nevertheless be restored to me. As before stated, it was a matter of much speculation as to how the abductors could get the money and restore the child without detection; but having the advantage of being unknown to us, and the

life of the child being held for the faithful performance of all their demands, and requiring ten hours after the money was received by them before the child would be restored, there seemed to be no difficulty in adopting ways to accomplish their object, if they could only be assured that I would act in good faith:—this they doubted, as is evident from the many cautions in their letters.

The propositions they make in the last letter are based entirely on their word, and so guarded is the second one, that no point is left uncovered that might lead to their detection. They profess to understand the expression in the personal. "Point out some sure and less public way of communicating, either by letter or otherwise," to mean that some sure way of transmitting the money to them should be suggested; while the object, as clearly stated, was to get into a more sure and less public way of addressing them than through the limited medium of the daily papers, to which I had been confined.

It was now resolved that any answers subsequently to be made through the personal columns of the papers, should be such as might be suggested by the circumstances as they should arise, and not to be circumscribed by such words as the abductors chose to dictate. This policy being settled, the answer published to this letter is a departure from all the others, by entirely disagreeing to their terms, and states boldly that we would not be restricted by their propositions. It appeared in the *Ledger* of August 4th, and is as follows:

John. Propositions are impossible. Action must be simultaneous.

On the 5th of August the following reply was received:

[No. 15. Received August 5, 1874.]

PHILADELPHIA, August 4.—*Ros:* we saw yu ansur. yu say it is imposible to agree to the terms, then we say emphaticaly yu can never redeem yu child from us. yu requested a more sure way of paying yu money for yu child we agreed to give yu a satisfactory way which would have made the change sure and safe for yu and safe for us, the way we propounded was the sure test of your sincerity and yu answer implies distinctly that yu son is not worth that amount to save him, yu may be entertaining the idea that if the money is not paid we will turn him loose. yu wil find when it is to late that this was a grate mistake. we tel yu plainly and positively that the chances of yu ever geting yu child again is ninety-nine out of an hundred against yu. if yu do not redeem him he is just as good as the money to us for we have him for reference though we may never work this thing in this country again. be where it may we have the Ros child to show that we do about what we say when we told yu your child should stand responsible for our word to us we ment just what we said and any perfidy on yu part would have brought instant death on his head. now we are convinced that you would not keep faith with us, if yu could violate it with impunity to yu child and yet we do not blame yu for that, and yet do yu supose that we would produce the child and hand him over to you the instant yu paid the money to us. the thing is absurd to think of such a change, we are not redy yet to have chains put on us for life. we did think once that we might effect the change in canidy in that way, but we find that cannot be, for yu could hold us there on robbery and extortion until yu could get us here and then yu would have us on the whole. Mr. Ros the way the case stands now, it looks as if yu dont want to redeem yu child, or at least yu must redeem him on yu own terms. That is impossible; we repeat it, that is absolutely impossible. If yu ever get him from us, and we are sure yu never will get him from any other than us, yu have got to come to us on our own terms and our terms wil be more stringent than ever. One has suggested to redeem yu child with counterfeit money; another to mark all the money, and then we could be traped after with the money. We say if yu had redeemed yu child with counterfit money, or with money privately marked, we would not restored yu child till yu had replace the marked money double-fold. A woman has proposed to Tagget to produce Charley and his abductors

for $5,000. This will be by far the cheapest way for yu to git yu child, for we wil never restor him for one dollar less than the amount we first named. when we found out yu circumstances was not good, we were goin to throw off one-half the amount an accept $10,000 but the public have raised hell so, and sympathised for yu in offring such large rewards that we shall have the whole or none. but they took good care in offering it in such away that they would never have to pay one dollar of it. if they ment bisines why did they not offer so much for the child and so much for the abductors. the reason is they thought one or the other rewards might have to be paid. but we dont think they would ever have to pay a dollar for either child or us. yu wil find the truth of this in the end (if i no myself). Mr. Ross we leave the city to-night. we shal not communicate with yu any more unless yu can satisfy us yu want to redeem yu child on our terms which wil be $20,000 and not one dollar less and it must be paid to us as we prescribe. when yu receive this we shall be at least 200 miles from here we leave the detectives of phila and Mr tagget to work out their clues. we think we have left no clues behind us. Charley wil remain where he was taken the second night after he left home. if Mr tagget can find a clue to that place he wil no doubt get the reward we have no feminines into that place. charley will never come out of there. it shal be his everlasting tomb—unless the ransom brings him out. we are not destitute of a few dollars yet, charley shal never starve to death if death it must be, it shal come upon him as instant as the lightning strock itself. Mr. Ros, if you have anything to say to us it must be through the personals of New York *Herald*. we can see that, where ever we are and no doubt every day, we shal notice nothing only from you. no matter what propositions others may make they wil receive no attention. yu say the action must be symultanious from the nature of this bisines that can never be, so that ends the bisines we told yu in 10 ours after the receipt of mony if we found it genuine, and not secretly marked al up, yu would then get yu child in our way of passing him over to yu. this does not suit yu so we wil leave yu to yu own way of giting and the detectives to work out their clues.

In this letter, the abductors say that unless the terms they proposed are complied with, the chances are ninety-nine out of a hundred against me ever getting the child, and that it is too absurd to think that they would consent to a simultaneous exchange, as they will not run the risk of being imprisoned for life.

They re-affirm that if the child is not redeemed by me, they will *kill* him, and refer to his fate, that others may know that they will execute their threats should they steal another child; but on account of the public feeling that has been aroused, they intimate that they will not attempt it again in this country.

They say they once thought that they might be able to effect the exchange in Canada, but find that they could be held there for robbery and extortion, and be brought back to the United States.

They notice that it had been suggested to give them counterfeit and marked money, and add that if I attempted to do so, the child would be held until twofold the amount had been paid to them.

They mention having discovered that my circumstances are not what they supposed them to be, and that they had thought of abating one-half of the amount of the ransom; but since the public had become so much interested, and offered so large a reward, they will adhere to their original demand.

They again say that the reward as offered, both for their arrest and the recovery of the child, was so arranged that the persons offering it never expected to be called upon to pay it, as it would be impossible either to find them or the child.

They announce their intention of leaving the city the same night, and that they will be at least 200 miles distant by the time their letter reaches me; and that they will not write to me again unless I signify that I will agree to their terms. They sneeringly advise the detectives to run out their clues, claiming that they have left no clues behind them by which they can be

traced; and declare that CHARLEY will remain where he was put on the second night after he was stolen, and that he shall not starve to death, but if killed, his death will be as sudden as a flash of lightning; and close the letter by informing me that hereafter any communication that I may wish to make to them, shall be through the medium of the New York *Herald*.

Notwithstanding the great length of this letter, the careful reader will observe how cautiously every step is guarded, and how tenaciously the kidnappers hold to every advantage already secured. There was no way in this country by which the child could be restored at the same moment that the money was paid, without exposing themselves to detection and the consequent risks. And as there is no clause in the extradition treaty with England, covering this specific offense, they sought to find out whether it was not possible to offer terms that would be more likely to be accepted in Canada. But they found out that if they should be arrested there, they could be demanded on the charge of robbery and extortion, and brought to the United States for trial.

When I discovered that the abductors had thought of effecting the change in the British Provinces, and that the crime of kidnapping was not included in the extradition treaty with any country, I wrote to General Simon Cameron, chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, (who has known me from my boyhood,) suggesting that for the protection of the people of our country in case of any future attempts at stealing children for the purpose of extortion, this crime should be included in any further additions to the extradition treaty, and received the following reply:

HARRISBURG, *August 5, 1874.*

DEAR SIR: I have your letter of the 31st, and will remember your suggestion, if any treaty is made.

We have all heard of your great affliction, and I assure you of the deep sympathy of my family and myself. Your good father was my friend for very many years. No purer man ever lived, &c., &c.

I trust you will make no compromise with the bad people who have stolen your child. Refuse to give them money, and they will have no motive for retaining the boy. God will protect him. If you pay now, you will have to pay again. Canada will be no hiding-place for persons guilty of so great a crime. Only see that the police of your city do their whole duty, and they will bring the boy home.

Your Friend, SIMON CAMERON.

C. K. Ross, Esq.

The public were clamorous for the arrest and punishment of the kidnappers at any cost, yet were ignorant of the risk to the life of my child and consequent terror to which I was subjected. It is comparatively easy to sacrifice another man's child for the public good, and my anxious suspense is easier conceived than borne.

Nearly a month had elapsed without getting any trace of the kidnappers or having any intelligence of the child, except that which was revealed in the letters, yet everything that indicated any probability of shedding light on the mystery was thoroughly investigated.

It was now determined that no answer should be made to the last letter, but patiently to wait further developments. This patient waiting was endured for three weeks before another letter reached us, and in the mean time some vague suspicion pointing to the abductors gradually took shape in the eyes of the authorities, which, as time passed, became more and more definite, the details of which will be reserved for another chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

LETTERS OF SYMPATHY AND TRACING OF CHILDREN.

WHILE this cloud of sorrow and suffering hung so dark over our household, many friends visited Mrs. Ross, endeavoring to cheer and comfort her, and by kindness and affectionate sympathy to help her bear the heavy burden which in the inscrutable providence of God had been laid on her.

Time does much to assuage affliction caused by death; but a living sorrow, whose burden increases day by day, who can bear?

Many strangers from the city and various parts of the country, moved by kindly feelings, called on us with words of sympathy and many proffers of aid. The memory of these expressions of sympathy will ever be cherished by us. With all our bitter experience of the evil in human nature, we have been continually reminded that the good far outweighs it. Many letters were also received from all parts of the United States, and from other countries, expressing similar feelings; selections from a few of which may be of interest:

PHILIPS COUNTY, ARKANSAS, 1874.

CHRISTIAN K. ROSS—*Dear Sir:*—I have just received some letters from a detective agency, stating that you have lost one of your little boys. I am doing all I possibly can to get some clue to the whereabouts of the child. It is hardly probable that he is in this state; but it is sure he is somewhere, and if every one will do his duty, he will be found,

and the kidnappers also. I know how to sympathize with you in the loss. It would be better to know he is dead than as it is.

I hope you will remember my address, and just as soon as he is recovered (if you shall be so fortunate as to find him) let me know the fact. Yours Respectfully.

HUDSON, WISCONSIN.

CHRISTIAN K. ROSS, ESQ.—*My Dear Sir:*—I am pained to know that no tidings of your little boy have yet been received. This whole community is touched with sympathy for you. No theme is introduced that touches so sensitive a chord in the hearts of all the people. God grant that he may soon be restored to your embrace, is the prayer of

Yours most sincerely, I. S. MOFFAT.

The same gentleman writes again, as follows:

My Dear Sir:—I have, from sympathy in your bereavement, come to regard you as a near friend. Myself and family watch with deep interest everything that transpires leading to the recovery of the child. We were thrilled with the notice a few days since of a child that would probably lead to his recovery, but fear it has turned out as all others have, etc.

A gentleman of this city writes as follows:

August 29th, 1874.

C. K. ROSS—*My Dear Sir:*—Your note of the 26th inst., containing a likeness of your lost boy, reached me only last evening, owing to a misdirection. I take the earliest opportunity of thanking you for the attention, and assure you I shall treasure the picture as that of an adopted child.

You and yours may rest assured that your cause is the cause of the whole land, and that every heart will be open and every hand raised to serve in it, until success is accomplished. Very sincerely yours, etc.

A gentleman writes thus from Boston, Mass.:

MR. C. K. ROSS—*Dear Sir:*—I believe years ago I did business with you. Since then I have retired from active business life, and you have my heartfelt sympathy in your deep affliction. I think your case the hardest I ever heard of, and if I can be of any help to you, I will be glad to aid in any way in my power. If you should issue an appeal to the press of the United States, I think there would hardly be a newspaper that would refuse to copy your card, and give it a prominent place, without charge. There are hundreds of families that do not

know yet, that you have had a boy stolen, and CHARLEY ROSS may be living next door to some of them and they not know it. My wife and I take such an interest in the case that I feel that with as much leisure as I have, that I ought in the cause of humanity spend some of it in helping you. If you have anything in the way of guidance, let me know, and you can have my gratuitous services.

Yours truly, SAMUEL T. HOLMES.

This letter was the beginning of a correspondence which has been kept up to the present time; and Mr. Holmes has worked, and is still working, in endeavoring to discover the child. He has not only spent his own time and means, but has also employed others; and whenever he hears of anything that would seem to shed light on the mystery, he promptly and energetically follows it up until it is thoroughly investigated.

Many other letters are in our possession from citizens of our own country, expressing similar feelings; but the above selections will suffice to show how wide-spread the sympathy extended. A few letters from abroad will serve to show that the people in other countries also felt a similar interest.

A lady writes thus from Scotland:

MACDUFF, SCOTLAND, *1874*.

MRS. ROSS—*Madam*:—Some time ago my father, who is Postmaster of Macduff, received a notice of the abduction of your son, CHARLEY BREWSTER ROSS. We felt very much interested in him, and wished we could see a notice in any of the papers, but heard nothing more until we saw in the Aberdeen Weekly "Free Press," of Friday last, an advertisement of the shooting of the burglars, said to be those who had stolen your son. My father and mother then wished me to write, and see if you would kindly let us know if your boy had been restored to you. I inclose an addressed envelope, and trust you will favor us by sending a reply.

I am yours, ——— ———.

An English lady writes as follows:

DISS, NORFOLK CO., ENGLAND.

SIR:—We have not been able to obtain any tidings of your darling

boy, of whose abduction we read in the circular we received some time ago. I have very many times thought of you, and deeply sympathized with you in the loss of such a pet as his photograph represents him, and have thought of writing before to you. May I ask the favor of a line just to tell us if you have found him? God grant that he may have been restored to you ere this, or if not, that this trying dispensation may be sanctified to you and yours, and that you may have strength given you to bear it, and that you may meet your darling where "Thieves do not break through nor steal." Pardon me for writing to you, a stranger; but my husband and self were so much affected on receipt of the circular. Accept our united kind and sympathetic regards.

I am yours respectfully, ——— ———.

The same lady writes a second letter, which is so expressive of kindness that I feel constrained to make a few extracts from it.

POST OFFICE, DISS., ENGLAND.

DEAR MR. AND MRS. ROSS:—I thank you very much for the letter written by your nephew. I was very much disappointed that you had not heard of your lost darling boy, and I have many times thought of him and you, and earnestly prayed that he might some day be restored to you *unhurt*. With this letter I post you a Diss paper, with a piece in it about the dear boy. My husband was looking at the paper, and his eye caught the name of CHARLEY ROSS. We felt quite as pleased to read it as though we had known him and you personally. I am very anxious to know if you have learned any truthful tidings, or better still, if he is home again. God grant that it may be so. May I ask the favor of a line from you as soon as you can give me the intelligence. I thank you very much for his photograph, which I have placed in my album, and prize it very much, for as soon as I had your first communication, I felt to love the dear child—he does look so lovable, etc., etc. My husband unites with me in kind regards to you both, with the earnest prayer that your darling (if not yet home) may be very soon. Please give him a kiss for me, tho' a stranger.

I am yours very sincerely, ——— ———

A gentleman of Filey, England, writes as follows:

KINGSHEET, FILEY, ENGLAND.

MR. C. K. ROSS—*Dear Sir*:—I have heard of the sad affair that has happened to you, in the abduction of your dear little boy CHARLEY. A

policeman has presented me with his photograph, which very much resembles a darling of ours we called Walter, who was buried last year, aged four years, etc., etc.

I do hope that by some means you will at least know what has become of the dear little fellow. What a heartless, nay, inhuman thing to entice him away from his home. I trust that a retributive Providence will bring them to justice. I deeply sympathize with you because your name is Ross. Yours truly, ——— ———.

One of the most touching incidents that occurred since our dear little boy was stolen, is related by a physician in the following letter, which is addressed to a brother of Mrs. Ross.

BALTIMORE, *May 30th*, '75.

MY DEAR FRIEND HENRY LEWIS —I remember you once told me that many curious incidents connected with the search for CHARLEY ROSS constituted a remarkable record, and I judged up to that time a record had been kept. If such is the case, and you desire to add another, which is probably as singular as any, I have pleasure in communicating the following:

Some time since I visited a hospital for insane in the neighborhood of Baltimore, and in passing a room, I heard the name of CHARLEY ROSS, which was several times repeated. Upon asking my attendant to allow me to enter the apartment, I found, on doing so, a vigorous man of say forty years of age, who was so maniacal, that he was secured to his seat; and he reached his hands convulsively towards me, and cried "I am CHARLEY ROSS! I am CHARLEY ROSS! take me! take me!" He repeated this almost constantly.

I don't know whether this will add to your budget any interest; but it affected me in this way. Here is a maniac, (he was from Washington, D. C.,) who raves and moans in the gloomy cell of a lunatic asylum, and the only living thought that seems to possess him, is that of a lost child and bereaved parents. It shows the depth of human sympathy not only; but the persistent expression of it to such a degree, that the man conceives himself to be the lost one, and implores to be taken home. Do you ever think of having a history prepared of this whole matter when the proper time comes? It seems to me good might come from it.

Yours sincerely, JOSEPH PARRISH.

These few letters have been selected from among a

large number which are alike in expressions of sympathy, and manifest the interest which strangers felt for the recovery of the child, wherever the circumstances of his abduction became known. Other letters proceed from motives wholly different.

Scarcely had three days passed after CHARLEY was taken, before attempts were made to extort money by false information, and by blackmailing. Many letters have been received from persons professing to know where CHARLEY was, and stating that for a consideration, information would be given that would lead to his recovery. These letters are generally anonymous, or signed with fictitious names, and request answers through the newspapers of various cities. All were replied to; but in only a few cases was the correspondence continued, or the writers discovered.

As early as the 3d of July, a man who had seen my advertisement in the newspapers, called at my place of business, and stated that he had found CHARLEY on the night of the 1st of July near the water works, and put him on the street car, paid his fare, and instructed the conductor to let him off at the Germantown depot. He gave the name of the company in whose employ he said he was; but insisted he should be paid for his loss of time and expense in coming to give the information. This he was refused; but was told if his report was found to be correct, he would be properly remunerated. Upon inquiry, he was found to be a tramp, who had taken this plan to get a petty sum of money.

A few days afterwards, a young man called and reported that he had seen a man, with a child answering the description of CHARLEY, get on one of the street

cars. This story seemed so plausible, that my brother had the superintendent of the line question every conductor, and found that no person answering the description had been on the cars during the day stated. This fellow came back to get the reward, and when accused of making a false report, acknowledged that he had made up the story, in the expectation of being paid for it. He plead hard not to be locked up, saying, "You can do anything you want to me, only let me go."

The following letters were also received, which were evidently intended to be a scheme of black-mailing, but which was never fully carried out.

ST. LOUIS, *August 13, 1874.*

MR. C. K. ROSS.—*Dear Sir:*—If you have got five thousand dollars you can get your boy. He is here in my possession, living on a small farm, and has been here for two weeks; he was sent here by a friend of mine for safe keeping; but to tell you the fact, I am tired of the job, and my friend is afraid to come after him. If you conclude to accept the terms, advertise in the personals of the *Missouri Republican*, of this city; let the words be, M. B., *Proposition Accepted*, and put your name to it, and then I will write to you again in confidence.

Yours, etc., M. B.

P. S.—Your boy is well and happy, but I am tired of him; don't forget to advertise, and don't forget that this is confidential.

The advertisement was published in the personal column of the St. Louis newspaper:

M. B.—Proposition accepted: send photograph or other proof.

And the following reply was received:

C. K. ROSS.—I have written to my friend, and cannot at present send you photograph as I intended to do: if no interference by the detectives, you shall have positive proof. (photograph and accurate d cription,) in ten days, provided my friend agrees to the proposition. He cannot leave your city at present; you can guess the reason. CHARLEY is well, and doing as well as any boy can do. M. B.

P. S —Keep quiet about this, and all shall be well. If I had my way about it, he should be sent to you without one cent. I am your friend; but I am in the power of others. Any way that I can assist you, without danger to myself, I will do it. M. B.

Nothing more was heard from M. B., and the conclusion arrived at was that he could not send any proof that he had the child, and was, of course, unable to carry out his nefarious scheme.

Another attempt at swindling is as follows:

NEW YORK, *July 16, 1874.*

CHRISTIAN K. ROSS, ESQ.—*Sir:*—I will give the address of *one* of the parties connected with the kidnapping of your boy, if you agree to send me $150 (half the reward) and the other half if your son be found through the information which I am sure it is in my power to procure. The party to whom I refer is now in New York city. His hair is of a lightish auburn hue, his figure is rather commanding, and the mustache and full whiskers he used to wear are all cut off to a narrow goatee. He wears a brown straw hat, narrow rim, and ring with a rose cut on a garnet on his little finger (right hand). He seems to have plenty of money, is at intervals an inveterate gambler—and I have met him four or five different times in New York. If you send me the means, I shall go on to Philadelphia and work out whatever clues I can get, and those *I now have*. It is puzzling to me that the police have not yet got your boy, for he is in your city, and the principal in the kidnapping is a gambler, and by no means unknown to Kennard H. Jones himself.

The real name of the party here is Frank Rankin, a native of Chicago. If you are disposed to accept my proposition, please answer at once, and I shall proceed to Philadelphia with as little delay as possible. The police will have to acknowledge our man when he is found. I am, sir,

Very Truly, —— ——.

My nephew, on receipt of the above letter, went to New York, and representing me, called at the house named; but did not find a person named —— ——. He learned that a man whose real name was James Knox, lived there, but was not at home; and suspecting that he was the writer of the letter, left a note for him, to which the following reply was received:

NEW YORK.

(FRANK?) C. K. ROSS—*Dear Sir*:—I will be at home to-morrow at 2 p. m. The letter you left for me was in mistake sent to Mr. James Knox, of ——— street, who used to room with me here. I have not seen Rankin since, but shall do all I can to-night.

Yours, very truly, ——— ———.

My nephew, calling at the house the next day, received the following note:

FRANK ROSS, ESQ.—I cannot find Rankin; therefore there will be no use in seeing you for the present. ——— ———.

This note satisfied him that the fellow avoided an interview, and that his design was to get one hundred and fifty dollars, if he could, by the story he had made up.

In the early period of the case, a number of similar schemes of extortion were attempted, none of which however were successful. Subsequently, several well-concocted plans were laid for various purposes, which involved considerable labor and expense before we were able to determine their designs. These will be given in the order of time.

A class of notes and letters was received, prompted apparently by no motive other than a desire to add to the anguish already inflicted, and wantonly to torture without any apparent aim. The following selections are given:

NEW YORK, *July 20, 1874.*

CHIEF OF POLICE—*Sir*:—You seem in such a hurry to get CHARLEY ROSS that you are overworking yourself for nothing. Now, my pal and me will not enter the lion's mouth, as you may well suppose; but if Mr. Ross don't fork over that $20,000 mighty quick, he will have a corpse in a coffin instead of CHARLEY ROSS. So you just tell him to hurry up, or he will have what I said he would. ONE OF THE ABDUCTORS.

PHILADELPHIA, *Friday, July 24, 1874.*

CHIEF OF POLICE.—*Sir*:—I know the party who has the Ross child. They are resolved not to come to terms unless Mr. Ross agrees. (They

will though.) He (the boy) is uninjured; but he goes on so about his parents, that I pity him. I cannot tell more; but I can lead you on his track. Keep this close for a time. One of the men had his picture taken two months ago in a gallery on Ridge Avenue. Dark sandy hair; darkish complexion; dark striped pants; reddish-brown whiskers; slight—I will tell no more. Tell Mr. Ross not to give the money—they are getting tired of keeping the boy. I will do all I can; don't betray me. SALLIE.

P. S.—Your reward has scared them, and they are going to take him out of town: watch every covered farm wagon leaving town from this date. Tell Mr. Ross he has a friend here; he don't know me, but I know him; and while I am here the child shall not suffer. S.

PHILADELPHIA, *September 18, 1874.*

MR. ROSS:—Your boy is alive; he is nearer than you have any idea. I would cheerfully come forward and testify to some very important points; but am afraid of the consequences. My object in writing you is a desire on my part to befriend you, to console you, by giving you the above information, based on a *partial knowledge* of certain transactions. Have patience and hope. I will see what can be done. W. B. C.

PHILADELPHIA, *July 5th, 1875.*

MR. MAYOR—*Dear Sir*:—Your city papers seem to trouble themselves a good deal about CHARLEY ROSS. He is not in New York as they say, and will not be restored as soon as you think. I have been here two weeks and I hear the talk, but the money must be paid down by one of the city officers, and he must be alone, and meet me (Miss E. or Mr. C.) and the meeting must be in the depth of night. You will know when and where, that is if nothing happens. I can say no more, but I must be off this afternoon to see how the nigger treats him while I am away. MISS E.

——— ———.

MR. ROSS.—You need not spend any more money to get CHARLEY, for he is sleeping soundly in his grave; so the whole matter is over, and you need not think to catch us, for we will go to Europe. Had you paid the money you would have had your boy alive; now it is too late. We are satisfied, and hope you are also. If you want to know anything further, advertise in the *Public Ledger* and you will receive an answer from us. We want ten thousand dollars to tell where he is; but he is dead, and not a very long time. The detectives were near his place, and we killed him. Let no tears drop from your eyes; why did you not mind us? NO SIGNATURE.

None of these parties were ever traced or heard from afterwards, and although these letters, as well as many others of a similar kind, were anonymous and disguised, yet the effect of them was to add poignancy to the sorrow that we were already enduring.

During the first two weeks after the abduction, scarcely a day passed without information from some part of the country, either by telegraph or mail, of children in the possession of suspicious persons, or who had been brought into villages and cities, and abandoned. Every case presented to us was investigated until we became satisfied that it had no reference to CHARLEY. Many cases reported were very quickly sifted, while others required patience and caution, with a vast amount of labor and expense, before a conclusion could be reached. One of the most difficult and prolonged of these was reported very soon after the abduction.

Near a village in one of the Western States, there lived a family who were looked upon by their neighbors with suspicion, because their house was known to be frequented by strangers who mysteriously appeared and disappeared. Shortly after CHARLEY was stolen, a man, formerly of this city, with a woman and two children, came to the village, and made their home with this family. The movements of these people gave rise to a belief by many living near that something was wrong. After watching them, and getting all information possible, the conclusion was reached that the persons from Philadelphia were concerned in the abduction of my little boy, and that one of the children with them was CHARLEY himself. Their surmises were communicated to us, with the names of the parties who had resided in

Philadelphia. Our informant was requested to follow the matter up in that place, and write us all the particulars that transpired, and if possible get a picture of the child. At the same time we began to make inquiry here to find out the character and habits of the man from Philadelphia while he lived there, as well as the name of the woman who went away with him, also to whom the children with them belonged.

Our inquiries resulted in discovering that this man had left the city, with the woman, the night my little son was abducted. Every letter received from our western informant seemed to add new evidence that we were about to reach the object of our search. Frequent night journeys were reported as being made by the parties to and from neighboring towns; in their conversation they were heard to say that they expected soon to come into possession of a large sum of money. They announced that they were going in a certain direction, but would start off in a directly opposite one. Strangers visited the house at night, and went away early in the morning; and the fact that they had with them a child of about the same age as CHARLEY, and answering in some respects to his description, with many other suspicious circumstances, tended to confirm the impression that they were concerned in concealing, if not in taking the child.

The sheriff and district attorney of the county were made acquainted with these circumstances by our informant, and the person from Philadelphia was placed under arrest. The officers telegraphed that the arrest was made, and inquired what further should be done. A picture of the child was ordered to be taken, and the

man to be detained until it could be determined whether the suspicions were correct or not. When the photograph was received, a telegram was immediately returned that the child was not CHARLEY ROSS. But the people were still not satisfied; some believing that a wrong picture had been forwarded to us, others that another child had been substituted and that the true one had been secretly conveyed away. The authorities declined to release their prisoner, and held him for trial. When tried, he was discharged for want of evidence against him. Yet those living near were even then skeptical, and a continual watch was kept on the suspected house and family. Every little circumstance was closely scanned, and the very plausible theory was suggested that there had been with the suspected persons another child, who had been sent to a confederate in St. Louis, Mo., the possible writer of the letters to me from that city, signed M. B. Thus when suspicions are awakened a hundred circumstances will be found to confirm them. While the matter was being investigated by the authorities here, and the people and authorities in the county where these events occurred, the Pinkerton detective agency was employed to aid in unraveling the mystery of the abduction, and to search for the parties. They heard of this trail, and after thoroughly investigating it reached the conclusion that the parties under surveillance were in no way connected with this crime. This case was very protracted, having required several months to arrive at a definite conclusion; in fact many of the people in the locality still believe that these parties have the child, as several letters recently received indicate.

Not only were we in constant communication by letter with the district attorney, sheriff, and other persons living there, but by the kindness and generosity of Mr. James Merrihew, superintendent of the Western Union Telegraph Company, the use of a wire was freely and cheerfully accorded to us, and we were thus put into direct communication with the parties, and enabled to converse fully with them. I feel great pleasure in saying that the officers of the Western Union Telegraph Company, from the time of the first public notice of the taking away of CHARLEY, have felt a deep interest in the matter, and have afforded me every facility in running out supposed clues, and in getting information when it was desired to have it speedily. Often by the use of the wires they have ended a suspense which otherwise would have lasted days or weeks, and frequently have given us the control of a wire for a whole day, and even longer when necessary; sometimes running a circuit of two thousand miles. Night or day, they have always cheerfully telegraphed our questions, and interested the operators at the various stations to help us in getting satisfactory replies.

I should be ungrateful did I not thus publicly acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. James Merrihew, superintendent of the line in Philadelphia, to Mr. Heber C. Robinson, manager, and to Messrs. Porter and Zeblin, chief operators, who have always so cordially and cheerfully greeted me upon entering the office, that really it is a pleasure for me to go to them with anything that I desire to have decided quickly. Many children supposed to resemble my little son were traced up in a very short time by the facility afforded in the use of

the telegraph lines, and the expense of long journeys often avoided. These gentlemen have become so familiar with the details of the case that they frequently examined matters relating to it, which were brought to their notice through the medium of the Associated Press, before I had the least knowledge of them.

Perhaps the most interesting instance of a child reported to us as being our CHARLEY, occurred in one of the Southern States; interesting because the child was rescued from an irresponsible woman, not his mother, who was neglecting him, and adopted by those who love him, and intend to care for him as one of their own children. It would afford me much pleasure to give a full history of this case; but for prudential reasons I shall be confined to a mere statement of the circumstances, suppressing the names of the persons interested, and the name of the place in which they live. The child's photograph represents him to be one of the handsomest children among the many whose portraits we have received. He has a bright, cheerful expression, full round face, clear complexion, and large, blue eyes, the very picture of health.

The first information we had of this child was by telegraph as follows:

I believe officers here have CHARLEY ROSS; resemblance to picture very striking, except hair is cut. He said his name was CHARLEY ROSS; but if his mamma knew it she would whip him.

Upon receipt of this telegram, we put ourselves in direct communication through the telegraph with the child, and asked him many questions, to some of which his answers were correct. To the question asked the child, "What he and his brother Walter played in?"

he answered, "a swing machine." Such a machine is in our yard, in which the children swing. Joseph W. Lewis, Mrs. Ross's brother, determined to go to see him. Before leaving, he requested the Chief of Police of the place to write the full particulars, and to send a photograph of the child. From the letter received, the following information was obtained: That a woman who formerly had resided in the place had recently returned, bringing with her a small boy whom she represented to some persons as her own child, and to others as an adopted child. It was asserted that the woman maltreated the child to such a degree that the neighbors observed it, and threatened her with punishment if she did not desist. The attention of the police was called to the matter, and suspicions were awakened that the child did not belong to her, and was no other than the lost CHARLEY ROSS. She was placed under arrest, and the child taken in charge by one of the citizens of the place. When examined, she told contradictory stories, which confirmed the people in the belief that he was our little boy. As soon as it was noised abroad in the town that CHARLEY ROSS was supposed to be there, intense excitement prevailed. And when it became known that a relative of the lost child was on his way to the place, the railroad depot was thronged with people anxiously awaiting the arrival of the train. Every one was hopeful that the little fellow would prove to be the real CHARLEY. When Mr. Lewis arrived, he was quickly driven to the house where the child was, and found him bearing no resemblance to the lost one. Disappointed, he returned, first sending the telegram home, "Wrong." Many persons did not think he took

sufficient time to determine the matter, and I received a number of letters after he left the place, saying that he could not have decided correctly without a longer examination, and that he did not stop long enough to ask the child any questions. It should however be known, that CHARLEY'S uncle had seen him almost daily from the time he was born, and that comparatively a short time had elapsed since the child had been taken from his home.

As soon as it was decided that the child was not my little boy, efforts were made by the citizens to take him from the woman; but it was found it could not be done, as she had in the meantime received a certificate, which stated that the child had been transferred to her husband the preceding March by a person living in Richmond. This paper gave them a legal right to the child, and they could not be dispossessed of it unless by their voluntary consent.

A gentleman residing in the town, who was attracted by the child, and had become interested in him, at once entered into negotiations with the woman for a transfer of their rights to him. Before, however, consummating positive arrangements, he obtained a history of the child as far as these people were able to give it, and endeavored to find his parents. Failing to trace him further back than the person who gave him to them, he gave the woman and her husband one thousand dollars, and obtained a legal transfer of the boy to himself. I have since received several letters from the gentleman, who expresses himself and family as delighted with their little Charley, and we are happy in the knowledge that the poor little fellow, who was sup-

posed to be our CHARLEY, has found such good foster-parents.

Another case of more than ordinary interest was brought to our knowledge about the same time. The following telegram was received by our Mayor:

GOSHEN, N. Y.

MAYOR OF PHILADELPHIA.—There is a child here I believe to be CHARLEY ROSS; have had his likeness taken and sent to Christian K. Ross by letter yesterday. JAMES W. HOYT,

Sheriff Orange Co., N. Y.

The letter of the sheriff with the picture came to hand, and an answer was returned, saying, "Not my son." A few days afterward, a gentleman of this city brought a stranger to see me, and introduced him as the Rev. Mr. Kenny, late of Havana, Cuba. Mr. Kenny stated that while he was in Washington City, he heard that there had been a great excitement in Goshen, N. Y., about a child he had left there in charge of a friend of his. I told him that the people in the village had supposed he was my little boy, and that the sheriff had sent me a picture of the child; but that I had written to him that he was not my son. Mr. Kenny showed me a photograph like the one sent me from Goshen. He then related the following history of the case:

He said that he was an American missionary of the Episcopal Church in Cuba. One day while walking through a suburb of Havana his attention was attracted by the cries of a child; upon entering a tent, whence the sound proceeded, he saw a woman having a heavy leather strap, to which was attached a large buckle; with this she was whipping a child, who was marked with welts, and great drops of blood were running down from the

wounds inflicted by the buckle. He remonstrated with the woman, who was rude and defiant; and noticing the child more particularly, he observed that his complexion was much more fair than that of the woman (who was a Creole), and thought him of American parentage. Becoming interested he applied to the authorities to investigate the matter, who, after an examination, took the child away from the woman, and handed him over to Mr. Kenny, for the purpose of trying to find his parents or friends. After making all the inquiry he possibly could on the island without discovering any one to claim him, and being obliged to return to the United States, he brought the child with him, and temporarily left him with a friend in Goshen, N. Y., while he attended to some business in Washington, D. C. He said also that he had not decided what he would do with the boy; but intended to act under the advice of Bishop Doane. Mr. Kenny expressed much sympathy and regret that the boy found by him was not mine.

During the months of December and January following, I received a number of letters from Cooperstown, N. Y., giving an account of a child in or near that place. To these answers were sent, accompanied by a photograph and description of CHARLEY, and questions to ask the child supposed to be he. Replies came which seemed to indicate that the child was indeed my CHARLEY. The letters were evidently written by a person unaccustomed to write, and showed possibly a want of tact in putting the questions to the child. They did not impress me sufficiently with the correctness of the writer's conclusions as to identity, and I asked that more definite information should be sent me, by which I could

determine whether the child was mine or not. In reply to this request I received a letter giving the name of a lady who is superintendent of the "School of the Holy Saviour," in Cooperstown, N. Y., and stating that the child was in her charge. I immediately wrote to her that a child had been reported to me as having been placed in her institution who was supposed to be my son, and desired her to send me a picture and description of him, and also to telegraph me her impressions about the matter. To which request I had the following telegram and letter:

COOPERSTOWN, *January 20th, 1875.*

C. K. ROSS.—I refer you to Bishop Doane, Albany, N. Y., for information. I fear you are mistaken. SUSAN T. COOPER.

The letter bears the same date.

DEAR SIR.—I fear you have been misled. The person who has been writing you is a respectable woman, but knows absolutely nothing of the facts relating to Charley Kenny. In my answer by telegraph I referred you to Bishop Doane, who knows the facts relating to the boy at our orphanage. Had there been the least probability of his being your dear little boy, in whom the whole country is interested, you may rest assured, we would have written you long before this. The facts relating to the boy now in our house are these. He was found in the hands of a circus company in Havana, Cuba. These people treated him so cruelly that the authorities interfered. It was discovered that the child was an American citizen, and an American clergyman passing the winter in Havana became interested in the child, and finding that he had no near relatives at hand, inquired carefully into the past history of the boy. So far as he could discover the child was an orphan. The circus people had stolen him some time before. The boy did not know his father's name; but said his good mamma used to call him Charley, while the circus people had given him another name.

Mr. Kenny, the clergyman, has adopted the boy and given him his own name, and intends to educate him thoroughly. If I remember rightly Mr. Kenny brought this boy to New York last spring. He is a bright, laughing, joyous child—looking six years old—tall and robust;

his precise age we do not know, of course; his hair and eyes are dark brown, his complexion rather dark than fair; his face is ruddy, not pale. He seems to have no recollection of the name of Ross, which a boy of his intelligence could not possibly have forgotten in so short a time. The circus people were training our boy to be a clown; this seems to have been their object, and not to make money by restoring him to his friends. Such are the facts as given to me. Of course, when we heard of a stolen boy named Charley coming to the orphanage, the idea immediately suggested itself that it might be your dear little boy; but we found that Bishop Doane and Mr. Kenny did not conceive it possible that this could be CHARLEY ROSS.

No one could rejoice more than I should if this should be your dear lost child; but I dare not hope it. To-morrow I will have the photograph taken and send it to you. I do not see any likeness in your child's picture, which you sent me, to Charley Kenny, except the curly hair. Allow me, my dear sir, to express my heartfelt sympathy with you and your family in this severe affliction. God grant that your dear child may yet be restored to you. Most sincerely yours,

SUSAN T. COOPER.

When the photograph was received it proved to be a picture of the same child which had been in Goshen, N. Y.

In February, 1875, I was in Red Bank, N. J., when a lady living in the place, learning I was there, sent for me to call and see her, as she thought she could give me information that would be of service in tracing CHARLEY. She said that while on a visit to Jersey City, a strange child had been brought to board near the place where she had been staying, by a man who seemed to be a priest. That he had left the child for a short time, and then returned and took him away. No one seemed to know the man or where he had gone. She described the child and the man. I at once recognized the Rev. Mr. Kenny and the Cuba child; after a little explanation, she concluded it was he. Thus three times was this little waif reported to be my CHARLEY, and

now that he has found a good home and kind friends, I trust he will prove a blessing to his new father, and to those who have undertaken to train him. Another case of interest is as follows:

At a time when I was absent from home, a lady, a Sister of Charity of the Catholic Church, who was passing through the city, by a note, asked me to call on her as she had been requested by the Lady Superior of a school to see me. She informed my brother, who called on her, that there had been sent to the institution a child who had some points of resemblance to our CHARLEY. She gave the name of the place in which the school is located, and the lady's name who had charge of it, saying that by writing to her we could get all the information we desired. My brother wrote and requested her to send a photograph and description of the child. To this the following reply, with the picture, was received:

HOUSE OF PROVIDENCE, SYRACUSE, N. Y.

MR. ROSS.—*Dear Sir*:—Your letter of July 29th, in reference to the interview with a sister from this institution, went astray, but reached me after a time. Just then the little boy had the mumps or some enlargement of the glands of the throat or neck, and we decided to await the abatement of the swelling before having the photograph taken. We now enclose it. The likeness is perfect, save a sternness not natural to the child. I think him not overlarge for a child five years old. He has brown eyes, his hair is neither light nor very dark, might perhaps be called a light brown; I think he has dimples in his cheek and chin. He is a dear little child, and we are anxious that he may be restored to his parents if they can be found—for we feel what deep, deep sorrow such a loss must be to them. We would only be too happy did he prove to be your missing son, that we might be the instruments of restoring joy and happiness to his sorrow-stricken parents, and almost feared to address you, lest we might add one to the many false hopes raised in the breasts of the father and mother, hopes destined to perish in a still more anxious search.

I am respectfully yours, SISTER BEATA E. MCFAREL.

CHARLEY KENNY, BROUGHT FROM CUBA.

The picture, although that of a fine-looking child, did not in the least resemble our CHARLEY. Shortly after receiving the above letter, another lady living in Syracuse wrote to me of a child, describing him, etc., etc., to whom I sent one of CHARLEY's pictures, and gave her some questions to ask the child, and at the same time asked her if she referred to the child in the House of Providence. She replied that the child she had written to me about was in a school, and that he could not give satisfactory answers to any of the questions put to him. This letter confirmed us that the child in the House of Providence was not CHARLEY.

During the few first months immediately following the abduction we were almost daily advised of some child supposed to be our stolen boy. Many of these cases were so very encouraging in their circumstances that our highest hopes were often excited, and the disappointment that followed in not realizing the fulfilment of them, was proportionately great. In time we learned, by sad experience, not to rely too hopefully upon any story, however probable, or trust too confidingly to any theory, however plausible. Giving slow credence to every case, we allowed none to be passed by without clearly and definitely satisfying ourselves that they were not correct.

Very soon after the publishing of the reward of $20,000, which was offered by certain citizens over the signature of the Mayor of the city, for the arrest and conviction of the abductors, and for the recovery of the child, a reward of $2,500 was offered for information that would lead to the detection of the kidnappers of CHARLES BREWSTER ROSS, and the name of

the person giving the information to be kept secret, if so desired, signed by Joshua Taggart, E. D. G. Carlin, R. A. Lukens, of the Pennsylvania Detective Bureau. The amount of this reward was subsequently increased to $5,000. What resulted from these advertisements I do not know. As this is a private detective agency, I am not conversant with their operations; but I am aware that for a time they were actively endeavoring to trace the parties.

As time passed away the mystery became more and more unfathomable. The regular detective force, together with special officers of the police department, were working with unusual and constant zeal. Amateur detectives, who had theories of their own about the matter, were pursuing them with unwearying ardor; but no approach whatever had been made towards a solution of the enigma, and every one was in entire ignorance as to the hiding-place of the kidnappers, or of any clue to it. It may be asked why this great difficulty existed in discovering the villains who had so outraged the sense of the security of the community at large? In the fact that the community felt and showed that they had been so greatly outraged lies the answer to the question. As was very properly stated in an editorial of one of our daily newspapers, "an essential difference exists between the abduction of a child for money, and all other crimes in which the main object is money. In the case of bank or bond robberies, where the plunder is recovered, it is generally through the medium of third parties: there is no discovery or detection about this, except that which is made by the robbers themselves. The kidnappers, in this instance,

dared not use the usual machinery. The aroused anger and absolute purpose of the people deterred them against attempting to obtain the money. The villains knew that they had perils to run, besides the risks of a common trial by law. They were therefore obliged to keep themselves and the child in unusual seclusion. They were compelled to be in the highest degree wary and secret, and to be doubly guarded against exposure which so frequently comes to light by accident, and which puts the police on the trail of malefactors."

Every theory propounded with regard to the abduction, however wild and extravagant, was fully tested; none were passed by. Some of these required but a moment's examination to be disposed of conclusively. Others that had some elements of probability in them, demanded closer scrutiny, and longer time to sift sufficiently to satisfy us of their worthlessness.

One theory was founded upon alleged inconsistencies and inaccuracies in the statements of my son Walter, and my refusal to submit the anonymous letters for public perusal. The insinuations thrown out, that Walter knew more about the disappearance of his brother than he had told, were based upon variations in his statements at different times and to different persons, and on his failing to say anything about his brother when he was found in Richmond, and from my prohibiting him from communicating with reporters and others. The inference drawn from these alleged circumstances was that the child had been trained to tell his story, and that myself or some member of my family were the guilty ones.

It should be remembered that Walter was a child

not yet six years old, and that during the first few weeks after the abduction, scarcely a day passed without many persons interviewing and talking to him on the subject, and newspaper reporters from our own as well as other cities visited my office or my house during my absence, who, anxious to get an item, and with very little judgment or discretion, put leading questions to the child, and caused him to say things not mentioned by him immediately after the abduction. He was thus kept continually in an excited, nervous condition, and at last it became absolutely necessary that I should prohibit any one from talking to him about the matter, except those interested in getting information for the purpose of unraveling the mystery. However, subsequent events conclusively proved that the child's statements were remarkably correct. With regard to his not saying anything when he was found in Richmond, about his brother CHARLEY, the little fellow showed such evidences of alarm, even when I met him near his home, that when I inquired where he had been he was not able to give me any answer, and in his excitement and alarm, evidently forgot to say anything about his brother.

This theory, although conveying an unnatural and monstrous suspicion, like all others was fully examined and criticised by those capable of judging, and may be classed, with many other similar ones, as one of the absurdities of the sad case. This would not now be referred to, only that it continued to be repeated for several months after the slander had been thoroughly exploded.

We have now arrived at a period where the first ray of light was shed on this dark and wicked secret, which shall be reserved for the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE REAL ABDUCTORS SUSPECTED—EMPLOYMENT OF THE PINKERTON DETECTIVE AGENCY IN THE SEARCH.

FOUR weeks had passed away, and notwithstanding the almost superhuman efforts in this city by the police, and by those who were interested with them, to trace the abductors and to find CHARLEY, not the slightest clue to either had been discovered. So effectually did the kidnappers cover their tracks when they left our city, that it was truly said by them in their last letter, "We think we have left no clues behind us." Still the search was prosecuted without cessation; professional pride and duty, combined with personal feeling and sympathy, stimulating the police to every possible exertion. All felt the highest interest in finding the stolen child, and in bringing the miscreants to justice. A great amount of difficult work was skilfully performed by practised men, whose time and energies had been engrossed for a whole month on this single object; yet they never wearied in the pursuit for an hour, believing they would finally be successful.

To us who were most deeply interested, it was a month of the most intense anxiety and distress, caused not only by the protracted absence of the child, but by many bitter disappointments from false clues. These disappointments in some cases almost led us to despond, and the darkness that still enshrouded the sad affair

well-nigh crushed all hope of ever finding either the abductors or the child.

The first information received in this city that there were any suspicious circumstances known in New York was by a telegram received on the evening of August 2d, as follows:

CHIEF OF POLICE OF PHILADELPHIA:—Send detective here with original letters of kidnappers of Ross' child; think I have information.

[Signed,] GEO. W. WALLING,
Superintendent N. Y. Police.

The next morning Captain Heins and my brother Joseph went to New York, taking with them the letters received from the abductors. At police head-quarters they met Superintendent Walling, who told them that through Capt. Henry Hedden, of the 13th Police district, he had heard of a man professing to know the persons who had stolen CHARLEY ROSS. Mr. Walling then sent a messenger for the officer and his informant. The man's story in substance was as follows: He said, that a few months before CHARLEY ROSS was taken away a plan had been arranged to abduct a child belonging to a member of the Vanderbilt family residing at Throgsneck, Long Island; he was informed of the plot, and asked to join in it. The child was to be taken while playing on its father's lawn, and secreted. Fifty thousand dollars was to be fixed as the ransom. He was asked to receive the child on a small vessel, run out on Long Island Sound, and keep it until the money was obtained, when he would be notified to come back with it, and the child would then be returned to its parents. For this service he was to get a certain portion of the money. He declined to join in this conspiracy. The circum-

stances connected with the stealing of CHARLEY ROSS being similar, he believed that the same persons who had arranged the plot to take the Vanderbilt child had stolen CHARLEY. He gave the names by which the persons had been known who proposed to him to engage in the Vanderbilt abduction as Johnson and Clark, and also their true names, William Mosher and Joseph Douglas, and said that he believed they resided in Baltimore, Md. His description of the men was more minute than we had already obtained, but corresponded in all essential points. He also said, that if his suspicions were correct, Mosher was the leader of the party; that he had arranged the plan, and was the writer of the letters I had received. He said he was familiar with Mosher's writing, and could tell if he saw the letters whether he had written them or not. Before being shown the letters, he described Mosher's manner of writing as rapid and careless: that he rarely completed a page without a blot. He said that he folded a letter in an awkward way peculiar to himself, and would often write either above or below the lines. When the letters were shown to him he affirmed without any hesitation that they were written by Mosher. He professed to recognize the handwriting, and called the attention of those present to the style of folding the letters as described by him, to the blots of ink which appear on almost every page, and other characteristics spoken of by him.

Captain Hedden stated that very soon after the abduction of CHARLEY was known in New York, this man had called at his office and told him that he believed he knew the persons who had stolen him; but declined to give any reasons for his suspicions. The captain placed

little reliance in his statement, yet he repeated it to Mr. Matsell, who was, at the time, Superintendent of Police in New York. The Superintendent advised him to follow the matter up. This he did, and after seeing him frequently, he gathered, little by little, a similar statement to that which had been made to Captain Heins and my brother.

On the 23d of July Mr. Matsell was made President of the Police Commissioners, and Geo. W. Walling Superintendent of Police.

Captain Hedden then reported the information he obtained to Superintendent Walling, who immediately sent for the man and heard the story himself.

At that time the trail was a mere suspicion. Yet the superintendent deemed it of sufficient importance to telegraph for a Philadelphia officer, to inform him of the circumstances, and to verify the assertion that the handwriting of the letters could be identified. At this interview it was arranged that the informant should endeavor to locate Mosher, alias Johnson, and to this end he wrote a letter addressed to Johnson in Baltimore. Superintendent Walling and Captain Hedden endeavored to find other persons who were likely to know Mosher and Douglas, from whom they hoped to get additional evidence that they were really the guilty parties. These men were both known as criminals in New York, and had been convicted of several offenses a few years ago. Mosher at that very time was a fugitive from justice, he having been arrested for burglary in New Jersey, and having made his escape from prison before he had a trial.

It should be here noticed that on the 3d of August

Captain Heins and my brother were in New York, and were made acquainted with the supposed clue to the abductors, which had been brought to the notice of the authorities of that city: that on the 5th of August I received a letter from the abductors, dated Philadelphia, August 4th, which states: "When you receive this we shall be at least two hundred miles from here;" and that the remainder of the letters, excepting the last two, were written and mailed in distant places. The inference is that by some means the abductors at that time had learned that they were suspected of the crime, and had fled from our city.

It was arranged with the New York detectives that the authorities in this city should be informed of every important fact connected with the case which might be developed in New York, and that whatever assistance could be rendered here should be afforded them. In accordance with this understanding Captain Heins received the following letter:

NEW YORK, Aug. 5th, 1874.

CAPT. WM. R. HEINS.—*Dear Sir*:—We are doing everything possible to locate those parties, and with good prospect of success. I will write you again to-morrow, or will telegraph if anything important is developed.

Yours, HENRY HEDDEN, Captain.

And on the 8th of August Captain Hedden writes as follows:

CAPT. WM. R. HEINS.—*Dear Sir*:—We are busy, and hope to find something very soon. Please send me a few newspapers published in your city during two or three weeks past. I want those that contain small advertisements. Papers of the style of the "N. Y. Sun" or "Evening News" are what I want.

Captain Hedden had learned that Mosher and Douglas manufactured a moth preventive, which they called "Mothee," and that they travelled about the country

with a horse and wagon, selling this with other small articles, and he thought that possibly the moth powder might be advertised. He was also informed that Mosher had a brother-in-law, Wm. Westervelt, in New York, a discharged police officer of that city, and suspected that he might be in some way implicated.

On the night of the 9th of August a message was sent to me to bring my son Walter to New York and report to Superintendent Walling. On the following morning I notified him of our arrival in compliance with his request. He called at the hotel at which we were, introduced himself, and asked me to remain in my room until he saw me again. The same afternoon, accompanied by Captain Hedden, he came and told me to follow the Captain's instructions. By arrangement with the Captain, early the following morning, August 11th, Walter and I went with him and saw Westervelt without his knowing we were observing him. Walter being asked if he ever saw the man before, replied, "No sir, never," and made the same answer to a question whether Westervelt was one of the men in the buggy on Washington Lane. After leaving the place where we saw him, Captain Hedden said, "I did not think he was one of the persons who took the children, but I wanted to be certain he was not; yet I believe he is connected with the matter, and is in communication with the abductors." We then went to Police Headquarters, where Superintendent Walling related to me the story he had heard, and said, regarding it in the most favorable light, it seemed to him probable that these persons accused of the crime were the real abductors; but that his opinion was based entirely on the suspicions of his

informer, and that he had not found anything to confirm him that they were correct; but would do everything in his power to gain further information, as well as to find the men.

This was the first knowledge I had of this clue; Intimations had been given me that there was something going on in New York, without, however, stating what it was.

After hearing Superintendent Walling, my impressions were that this was the most likely clue we ever had to the abductors, and I felt hopeful that we would soon have the suspicions confirmed, or reach the parties.

It was stated before, that the informer had written a letter to Johnson at Baltimore; but, receiving no reply, he, with an officer from New York, was sent to Baltimore to try to find these men. On their way to that city they stopped in Philadelphia, as the following telegram announced:

NEW YORK, *August 11th, 1874.*

CAPT. WM. R. HEINS.—One of my men and another man will be at your office to-morrow A. M., at 9 o'clock. HENRY HEDDEN.
Captain 13th Precinct.

The officer brought with him a letter of introduction from the Superintendent, in which he also states the object of their visit to Baltimore as follows:

NEW YORK, *August 11th, 1874.*

CAPTAIN HEINS.—*Dear Sir:*—The bearer, Officer Doyle, and another man go to your city, and intend going on to Baltimore, where the family of Johnson lived a few weeks since. Johnson, we think, is the prime mover in the Ross abduction. Mr. Doyle and the man who is with him both know Johnson and his family well. This Johnson has a wife and four children Some time since he escaped from jail at Freehold, New Jersey, while awaiting trial for burglary. His correct name is Mosher.

It may be that we are on the wrong scent; but I think not. If they can locate Johnson's family, we can certainly find his whereabouts.

Yours respectfully, GEO. W. WALLING,
Superintendent.

Officer Doyle and his companion failed to find any trace of Mosher's (alias Johnson's) family in Baltimore, and believing, from information which they had received, that the family lived in Philadelphia, they returned to this city, and spent several days here in an unsuccessful search for them.

On the 13th of August Superintendent Walling wrote as follows:

CAPTAIN HEINS.—*Dear Sir:*—If we are right in our suspicions, and the parties that Detective Doyle and his companion are searching for in Baltimore are guilty of abducting the Ross child, in all probability the child is kept on board of a small boat, and may be in your vicinity.

Yours in haste, G. W. WALLING.
Superintendent.

Mr. Walling knew that Mosher was a boat-builder by trade, and that he frequented the waters around New York in a boat on marauding expeditions, and supposed that a small vessel would be the most likely place in which Mosher would conceal the child. On receipt of the above letter, all the boats, vessels and barges lying in the Delaware and Schuykill rivers were searched, as already related. Up to this time no more definite information had been obtained, except that Mosher, after his escape from jail in Freehold, N. J., about three years prior to these events, had been lost sight of by the police, and had been absent from his former haunts in New York.

This clue, as before stated, rested entirely on the statement of a person who had been solicited to be a participant in a similar abduction; and while the author-

ities of New York and Philadelphia did not feel at all sanguine that the information was correct, yet they deemed it best to pursue the trail without communicating their action to any person except those actually engaged in working it up. This secrecy seemed necessary, because several times before the police had been defeated in accomplishing their purposes by the injudicious publicity which had been given to their movements.

All that I knew of the matter I learned on my first interview with Mr. Walling. I read none of the letters or telegrams that passed between the two cities, and felt that if the end could be reached better without my being kept posted in the means used, I should be contented by asking general questions. The correspondence and telegrams relating to this clue already given, and those to follow, came into my possession very recently, and were then read by me for the first time.

The press, looking only at results, found fault with the police and charged them with inefficiency; and so long a time had now passed without apparently getting any nearer to a solution of the mystery, that the public became impatient: a desire began everywhere to be manifested that every means should be employed to ferret out the abductors and to recover the child. A few citizens deeply interested believed that the time had arrived when a new power should be called in to attempt to unravel the mystery, and concluded to employ the Pinkerton detective agency in the case. While these negotiations for this object were pending, and arrangements were being made, a letter from the abductors reached me from New York City.

The last letter received from the abductors was dated August 4th, and no reply made to it. My advisers deemed it best not to answer it, believing that when it was found that no notice was taken of their letter they would write again. This they did after a delay of nearly three weeks. The suspense was long; but when the letter did come, there was a feeling that a point had been gained, and that the villains were becoming anxious to close the negotiations. The letter was dated and mailed in New York, August 21st, and was received about nine o'clock the same night in Philadelphia, and is as follows:

[No. 16.]

NEW YORK, August 21.—*Mr. Ros:* we have heard nothing from yu since we wrote yu about 3 weeks ago. we then told yu if yu had anything to comunicate to us to do it through the New York *Herald* personals. we have seen nothing but these words (Christian K. Ross, 304 Market street). we know not what to make of that. we have therefor come to the conclusion that yu don't mean to redeem yu child on the conditions which we proposed. yu must bear in mind we would never agree to any other terms. the fact of yu saying the action must be symultainous is absolutely imposible. we would require at least a few ours to examine the mony and see if it were spurious or all marked up and then but a few ours more would be necessary to place yu child in yu possession for he is not so far off as yu may imagin. the folowing is the way we had intended to return him to yu. we was going to put a labill on his back and take him to a respectable house at night rouse them up. tell them to take this child as directed pay them for their trouble, this arrangement does not me with yu concent so there is no other alternitive left yu. now we demand yu anser yes or now as we are going to urope the 24 Sept and he has got to be disposed of one way or the other by that time. if you say redeem him it has got to be on our terms alone if yu do not answer we shall take it as granted that yu dont mean to pay yu money. we shall act accordingly. address (John New *Herald* personals.) you are listing to old womans visions and dreams which wil never find yu child. we could have told yu it was useless to go to illinoise to look for charly but yu would not have believed us.

In this letter the abductors call my attention to the fact that no reply was made to their letter of August 4th, and to having seen my name in the personal column of the New York *Herald*, which they do not understand. They speak again of the impossibility of making the exchange simultaneously, and say they will not agree to any other than the terms already proposed by them; that they will require a few hours to examine the money, and then a few more hours would be required in which to return the child, but that he is not so far away as I might suppose. They also state the way in which they propose to return the child to me, and demand an answer to the letter, threatening to go to Europe the following month, and saying that this matter must be disposed of before that time. They advise me not to travel around to look for CHARLEY, as no persons but they have him.

It will be observed that the tone of this letter is much milder than any of its predecessors. It is wanting in the cruel threats in which they had indulged so freely in the other letters.

The abductors had now become fugitives from our city, where they were not known to the police authorities as criminals, and had fled to New York, where they were not only liable to be arrested for this crime, but also for another offense. Yet they felt safe there, so long as they had one interested, one who by giving them information of the doings of the authorities, aided them in secreting themselves.

My name appeared in the personal columns of the *Herald* in answer to an anonymous letter, which had no relation to these men; yet the fact of their observing it

shows how impatient they were for an answer to their last letter. In all the former letters their whole aim was to get the money, without laying themselves open to discovery. In this they, for the first time, indicate the way in which they propose to get CHARLEY to his home. They evidently knew they were suspected of having committed the crime, as they desire to hasten the negotiations by stating that on the 24th of September they would go to Europe. They seem to have taken it for granted that I was following out the many suggestions made to me by clairvoyants and spiritualists of every species, and that I had gone or sent to Illinois, to look at a child. This they were induced to believe by the newspapers, which they evidently read closely.

After the arrangements between the Pinkerton agency and the citizens who employed them were completed, and a committee of citizens had been appointed to carry out their plans, I was informed that they were engaged to work in the case. So anxious was I to end the tortures which my family and myself were enduring, that without inquiring into the conditions upon which the agency had been employed, I was glad that their assistance had been procured.

On the 26th of August, the following personal was published in the New York *Herald*, in reply to the letter of August 21st:

John. Did not answer, because your proposition led my friends to doubt whether you ever had it. Write, giving better proof, and name an attorney, or other person, through whom arrangements can be made.

To which the following answer was received postmarked Rondout, New York, 27th of August:

[No. 17. Postmarked Rondout, 27th of August.]

ALBANY, August 26.—Mr. Ros—Your timely answer saved yu child. We had determined if yu did not care to save him we would not swerve one jot or tittle from the fate we had designed for him—not that we delight in blood but it was inevitable with our selves in order to carry out our plan of action yu ask for no more prof that we had him or that we have him—that is right—yu should have prof that we are the identical ones who kidnaped Charley—we thought that yu were well satisfied that we were the kidnapers—we wil first prove to yu we took Charley—ask Walter if one of the men did not hold him betwen his legs an partly on his knee with the cloth in front of him while Charley set behind us both entirely out of sight—ask him if he did not want to go up on main road to git fireworks an we told him we would first go to ant Susy's that she kep a shop where we could get them cheaper. ask him if we did not keep givin him pieces of candy as we rode along. ask him if we did not go from your house west to Morton street and then south instead of going towards the depot on Washington lane as it has been stated in the papers these remarks we think are suficient to prove to yu that we are the men who took him if yu have received any other letters headed other than Ros or Mr. Ros they are forgeries, we have sent you 8 or 10 letters in all, if you had accepted the proposition we made yu some four weeks ago yu would now without doubt have yu child safe in yu own house but yu rejected the offer and left us without the means to negotiate with yu. Mr. Ros if yu ever expect to recove yu child yu have got to in a measure rely on our faith. in dealing with us yu must be satisfied that yu child was taken for a ransom. we have set the price and asked the ransom of yu. do yu think if yu paid the ransom once that we would ever ask it the second time. no man would be foolish enough to pay ransom the second time for a thing he had paid for once and did not get. if we wanted more money from yu we would ask it now, instead of asking more we would rather throw off some. but the public have interfered so much in this bisiness that we are determined every dollar shall be paid or not one cent Yu have asked that the action between us should be symultainous Yu must know from the nature of this busines that is impossible—first we would have to give yu Charley when we receive the mony yu git yu child, We might git a a bundle of brown paper and a chain around our necks No sir Mr. Ros We must have at least 4 or 5 hours to examine the money to see if yu have delt faithfully with us what we mean is yu must give the mony in good condition unscarified or not at all, then yu have performed yu part

in good faith When that is done we have no further use for Charley he has answered the whole end for which we got him and we as vile as we are would be working against our own interests if we did not return him to yu as we promised we only wish it was posible to effect the change symultaniously but as that cant be done yu must accept the best we can offer yu, do yu open this correspondence with the intention to pay yu money on our terms and git yu child or is it the foolish advice of some of yu friends again with the idea of entraping us. do you want to daly along and keep your child month after month living in a place where the strongest could not live over one year. we would not let him unnecessarily sufer but this exteriordary search has made it necessary to keep him where the light of the sun has never shown upon him since the 2d day of July. we have seen Charley about 4 days ago his whole cry is he wants Walter to come see him and he is afraid he wil not go to Atlantic City with his mother. don't think this is only an appeal to your affection as a farther it is symply the words that he used when we saw him last. Mr. Ros. One word more—do you want to redeem Charley or not on our terms. if yu do yu must make up you mind that the money must be paid in good faith. don't deceive yu self that if the ransom is not paid that we will set yu child at liberty. we can never do that our whole plan would be frustrated at one blow and our work would come to naught. as yu deal with us so shal we deal with you in return. we saw yu personal in *Herald* of 26. whatever answer yu have to make to this let it be in Albany *Argus* no put it in New York *herald* personals as we wil leave here today and drop this somewhere on OUR WAY to New York. we can see the New York *herald* any part of the United States.

(Address as be for John.)

P. S.—yu acted wisely in refusing these letters until yu got yu child —if yu had published them, no doubt it would have been the means of sacrificing you child.

The abductors begin this letter by saying that my answer to their last letter had saved the child. They profess not to delight in blood, but are determined to carry out their plans, even though they should involve the taking of his life. Admitting that it is proper for me to have proof that they kidnapped CHARLEY, they profess to have additional evidence, and present ques-

tions to be asked of Walter to prove that they really did take the children away. A statement is given of the manner in which they addressed me previously in their letters, with the number of letters sent to me by them. They state that if their offer to make the exchange had been accepted, I should have had the child four weeks ago, and say that I must rely on their word for the fulfillment of their part of the proposition. This is supported by the argument, that it would be foolish for them to expect another ransom after the first had been paid. They say that had not the public interfered in the business, they would have lessened the sum of money fixed as the ransom; but will not now. They argue that it will be impossible to make a simultaneous exchange, and say that I would get CHARLEY, and they might receive a bundle of paper and a chain around their necks. For these reasons, they require time to make themselves secure. If they do not restore the child after finding that the money is all right, they would be working against their own interests, but are still doubtful about my dealing with them in good faith. They endeavor to work upon my feelings as a father, by saying that CHARLEY is necessarily kept closely confined, where no one could live over a year, and where the light of the sun has never shone on him since the 2d day of July, and by telling me that the continual cry of CHARLEY is to see Walter, and to go to Atlantic City to be with his mother. They claim that their whole plan would be frustrated, if the child should be set at liberty without the ransom being paid, and re-affirm that as I deal with them, so will they deal with me; and finally they require an answer in the New York *Herald*, with the same address of "John."

Rondout, as most of my readers know, is built on the west bank of the Hudson river, at the mouth of a stream to which the name of the town has been given, and is about ninety miles north of New York City; here is the terminus of the Hudson and Delaware canal. This place was visited at a later date by Mosher, Douglas and Westervelt, and will be noticed again in the order of time.

It is hard to believe that in our country a man could be so devoid of feeling as to threaten deliberately to take the life of a little child, in order that his sad case might be referred to as an example to terrify other parents into redeeming their children stolen from them. Yet we find this threat repeated again and again by the writer of these letters. When Walter was asked the questions which the kidnappers gave us in the letter last received, his answers to all were as indicated by the writer, except that in reply to that relating to the direction first taken after getting into the buggy, he said that there was a dirty lap-cover drawn up which nearly covered them, and that he had asked the men to take them to the main street to get the fire crackers; but that they said, "We will go to Aunt Susy's, where you can get a pocket full for five cents." He said that they had given them candy all along the road, and when he got home he had still a considerable quantity in his pocket. But he stated very positively they did not go to Morton street, but turned the horse before getting there, and went out Washington Lane, passing by the railroad station. My name in all the letters is spelled "Ros." They were wrong, however, in saying they had sent me eight or ten letters; I had received sixteen

written by the same person and addressed in the same way.

Before committing the crime, the kidnappers did not suppose that public feeling would be so intense, or popular indignation so fiercely aroused. This is again referred to, and is given as an additional reason why they will not change their original demands, evidently fearing summary vengeance from the people.

It is impossible for me to describe my feelings when I read the closing part of this letter, which speaks of CHARLEY being left in close confinement. Imagination suggested every conceivable dark and loathsome place as his prison—a cave, the hold of a vessel, or an abandoned mine—these and other like places were conjectured as one of his hiding places where the light of the sun might be shut out. It seemed to me that it could not be possible that he should be treated so cruelly: though the statement was before me, I felt that it could not—must not be so—that he must soon be discovered. I fancied that I could hear his plaintive appeals to see his brother Walter, and that he might go to Atlantic City to be with his mother. Who so callous as not to be touched by the piteous cry of a child? and yet these miscreants, more cruel than brutes, tamely listened to the wailings of this distressed and innocent child, whom they had stolen from his home, without any emotions of pity; and then, with worse than fiendish calculation, could write to his parents, already broken down by long-continued torture and suspense, "His whole cry is, he wants Walter to come to see him," "and he is afraid he will not go to Atlantic City to be with his mother;" and all this for the purpose of making money.

Mr. Bangs, Superintendent in New York, and Mr. B. Franklin, Superintendent in Philadelphia of the Pinkerton detective agency, after obtaining all the information possible by personal inquiries and examinations, besides having been made acquainted with all that the public authorities had investigated, entered vigorously upon their work, by preparing circulars with photographs of CHARLEY; large and small posters describing the child, men, horse and wagon, headed with the $20,000 reward offered by the Mayor; bills with wood cuts and lithographs of the child; photographs with descriptions on postal cards, and photographs mounted on cards and bills, offering a reward of one thousand dollars for any information to the person who would give positive information as to the owner of the horse and buggy used by the kidnappers, and for information of the house the kidnappers stopped at prior to said abduction.

The different circulars and descriptions were distributed in immense numbers; being sent to the sheriff of every county in the United States, to every postmaster in the United States and Canada. Photographs and descriptions were forwarded to every railroad office, with a request that each conductor be furnished with a copy; to every steamboat and steamship that came to any of the ports of the United States and the Canadas. They had them put permanently on all the ferry boats and street railroad cars, in the various railroad depots; in fact, wherever any one could be reached by means of printed posters or circulars, there could be seen printed descriptions of CHARLEY, with his picture, or hand-bills describing the

abductors and their horse and wagon. This detective agency did not confine itself to our own country, but sent large quantities of the printed matter to England and other parts of Europe. Thus the widest publicity was given to the abduction, and the picture of CHARLEY ROSS was scattered by this means, so that there was scarcely an English-speaking town or village where it could not be found, either posted up in a public place, or in the possession of some of the citizens.

The details of their work I never knew. They were employed by gentlemen of this city who were deeply interested in restoring the child, and in the detection of the criminals, and who believed that this agency had greater facilities than any other organization for accomplishing the work. A daily report was made to a committee selected from among the contributors to the fund raised to pay the expenses of the work. It was therefore not necessary, and perhaps not proper, that I should know what means were being employed. It was enough for me to hope that, with their aid, results would be reached that should restore to me my child.

The funds raised for the object of meeting the expenses incident to their employment, have been long since exhausted, and the committee disbanded.

My nephew, in the latter part of September, went to Scotland to investigate a case, and see a child discovered by the agency, supposed to be CHARLEY; but returned, after an absence of six weeks, with the oft-repeated word "Wrong." Mr. Joseph W. Lewis went to Montreal, Canada, about the same time, and came back, after several weeks, with the same answer—"Wrong." One of the detectives was sent to Colorado

to look after a child, who had been reported in that distant territory as being my little son. He also returned disappointed.

For months the Pinkerton men performed an immense amount of work. All means required were at their command, to use at their discretion, and every assistance that could be, was afforded by the counsels of the committee, gentlemen of the highest standing in our community and of the clearest judgment that could be selected; yet they failed to discover anything that shed a ray of light on the mystery. The failure is, of course, to be attributed to the peculiarities of the case, which compelled the abductors to use the utmost caution in all their movements, and to cover all their tracks so effectually as to leave behind them no traces which might lead to their discovery.

The constant failures to find out the perpetrators of the crime show the impotence of all the appliances of police and detectives when confronted by cunning and audacious criminals, who, using the advantage of their position, even defy pursuit.

Efforts continued to be made in New York to get additional evidence as to whether Mosher *alias* Johnson and Clark were the real abductors, and on August 24th, 1874, Superintendent Walling wrote as follows:

W. R. Heins, Captain Detectives.—*Dear Sir*:—Yours of 22d received. I am more confident than ever that the parties Clark and Mosher *alias* Johnson are the parties we want. I knew before receiving your letter that they were somewhere in this vicinity, etc., etc.

Some one has let them know that they are being looked after, and that is the reason for their change of tone. They are frightened, and would, I believe, make terms very moderate, provided they could be assured of safety. There is no danger of their going to Europe; they have no

money, and Mosher's wife and children would keep him here. Of this you can assure Mr. Ross, providing I am right as to the parties, and I have no doubt of it. I think it would be well for Mr. Ross to keep in communication (if possible) with them.

You can assure Mr. Ross that I think there is no danger of their injuring the child, or of their taking him to Europe, always providing we are on the right track.

Yours, in haste,

GEO. W. WALLING, *Supt. of Police.*

While the clue that pointed to Mosher and Douglas as being the criminals was regarded as the best which had been brought to the notice of the police authorities, still, whenever information was received of other suspicious persons or circumstances, they were fully inquired into.

Mosher and Douglas were fugitives from our city, and out of the jurisdiction of our police; and all our officers could do was to assist the New York authorities, by sending to them what information they could obtain here to confirm anything they learned there. Officer Doyle and his companion returned to New York without being able to locate Mosher's family, and Supt. Walling sent for Westervelt on the 18th of August, and endeavored to engage him to assist in finding the men and recovering the child. After considering the matter for a few days, he concluded to help him. The manner and results of this assistance will appear hereafter.

On the 11th of September, Supt. Walling wrote to Capt. Heins:

DEAR SIR.—Since writing you this A. M., I have seen Westervelt; he says he knows nothing of the whereabouts of Mosher. He says Mosher lived in your city, about four months ago, on Monroe street, near 3d street, and that he had a stable between 3d and 4th streets, in some

street name not known, but the third or fourth street from Monroe towards Washington avenue. The stable was an old wooden building with very large doors, and near 3d street ; that a wagon answering to the description you gave me was in said stable at that time, and may be there yet, but probably not; that they kept in said stable a dark bay horse ; but he is confident the horse has been sold, but does not know to whom. I showed him the drawing of the wagon you gave to me, and he says he could not make a better one had he it before him, except that he thinks his would not be quite so much rounded at the top.

Yours, etc.,

Signed, GEO. W. WALLING, *Supt.*

This was the first information that was obtained of the locality in which Mosher's family had lived while in this city, and where he had kept his horse and wagon. By inquiries made by Capt. Heins, it was found that a family named Henderson had resided at 235 Monroe street. This proved to be the name Mosher had assumed when he came to Philadelphia. It was also learned that Joseph Douglas, alias Clark, had lived with them, and that Mosher's wife and children had moved to New York on the 19th of August. On making inquiry for the stable, it was found that there had been an old stable on Marriott's Lane, now torn down, and part of which Mosher, alias Henderson, had rented, and there kept his horse and wagon.

An explanation seems to be necessary here, why the searches in July, among the stables of the city, failed to discover this stable or shed in Marriott's Lane. The facts are these, as they were learned after the information had been received where to look for the stable. It had been rented by a person who sublet stall room to others, and on the 1st of July the stable was leased by another man, who did not know the former occupants : so that when the officers inquired of

him about the horse and wagon, he knew nothing about it, and only knew those persons who were using the stable at that time; very soon afterwards the stable was torn down.

It was deemed important to find some of Mosher's writing, that it might be compared with the letters received from the abductors. Capt. Heins succeeded in finding his assumed name signed to a number of receipts; but that was not sufficient to identify the writing. Westervelt was asked to procure a letter or any paper that he knew Mosher had written; but declared he did not know where to get any. Efforts were made by and through other persons to the same end, but without success.

On the 6th of September, the following personal appeared in the New York *Herald*, in reply to the letter of August 26th:

John. He denies the direction you give. I require conclusive proof. Send clothing to any point that you please, and advise.

On the 6th of September, an answer was received as follows:

[No. 18. Postmarked New York, September 6.]

Mr. Ros we cannot see how yu can resist the proof that we have got him notwithstanding Walter's contradictory story, yu must admit he was taken by some one yu must admit he was taken for a ransom now if we have not got him who has got him—has any one else asked yu for a ransom we think not. mr. percell that benevlent man who offered to pay the ransom now says yu have never lost yu child—we know percell lies because we have positive that we have him and yu have positive proof that yu lost him. Mr. Ros in order to convince yu that we have him yu require some of his cloths sent yu. it was hinted some six weeks ago in one of the editorials to send yu some of Charly cloths in answer to that we said we would never do anything of the kind because we could give an irrestible proof without it—if we sent you any cloths we have got to expres them which we wil never do we don't know for cer-

tain wether his cloths have been saved up to the time we dont go near him often for we have nothing to do with guarding him though we have seen him three or four times since 2d of July we told you in one of our letters that Charley had never been in any way whatever disguised nor at that time he had not been but since then he has had his hair cut short and girls clothes put on him now wether they have kept his cloths or not we cannot say and we cannot send them if they have them the probibility is they have destroyed them for every possible precautionary measure has been taken since we have seen what great efforts have been made to find his place of concealment we were surprised to think yu would make such efferts to find him when we told yu that to search for him yu was only searching for his life and any approach by a detective to his hiding place would be a certain sign for his destruction yu either don't believe this or yu don't regard the life of yu child where he is now confined wil be his tomb unles yu bring him out with the ransom yu detectives can never do it your friends who advise yu that we wil set him free should you not ransom him wil be the worst advise yu ever had. your friends yu say ask for more proof that we ever had him they are as foolish as percell for he says you never lost him. your detectives have never had the slightest clue or trace of him since the our he was taken but in order to convince these sceptical friends that we had him and have him we will now give the detectives a small clue to work upon but it will serve no other end only to convince these sceptical friends or yours that we have him. on the night of 2d July at 11 o'clock we passed through Trenton, N. J. Charley lay in my arms asleep. after we had passed about 2 squares up bridge st Charley's hat drop off and we did not notice it until he woke up and asked for his hat we would not go back for it. you can get this hat by advertising for it there if it is not worn out. if it should be worn out you can find out who found one that night or the next morning. now ask one of your domestics or Mrs. Ros if charley did not have on the afternoon of the first of July a narrow faded pink ribbin tied around his head to keep the hear out of his eyes. if yu find this a fact which we have no doubt yu wil and as it was never described in the advertisement, we think no human being could mention it but the party who took him. if this does not satsfy yu and yu friends that we have him then yu must go unsatisfied. this clue of the hat will end there when you find it and it wil avail yu nothing more. let the detectives work it up much as they please, the clue will end there we know or we would not told of it. Mr. Ros we dont know wether yu ever mean to ransom yu child yu certainly dont act much like it. but we do know

yu will never get him without it unless you are fortunate enough to ketch us knapping and take him by stratagem. there is not one chance in 10,000 of ever getting him that way. yu must not delude yuself with the idea that if we go to europe this month that we wil set yu child free or take him with us and then will be the time to find him. that wil never be Mr. Ros we have told yu befor if yu ever expect to get yu child yu wil have to ransom him and to the full amount we named. if you deal fair with us we wil deal fair with yu if yu play any tricks with us we shall do likewise with yu. whatever you do with us we shall do likewise with yu. whatever yu do with us yu must do it in good faith or not at all then yu get yu child safe and sound. we shall not keep up this correspondence much longer, whatever yu mean to do must be soon. we see the New York herald every day whatever yu have to say we wil notice it. we are now in lansingburg above Troy New York we dont know where we shall post this letter yet we leave here to-day.

This letter begins with an argument to show that the proofs already given ought to be satisfactory that the writer of the letters had taken CHARLEY, notwithstanding Walter's statement of the direction in which they went was contrary to that which the abductors mentioned in their last letter. They refer again to an advertisement, which was continued a long time in the New York *Herald*, over the name of Purcell, who was not known to us, and say they can give irresistible proof that they have CHARLEY without sending any clothing. They assert that they had seen him only three or four times since the 2d of July, and that his hair had been cut off, and girl's clothes put on him to disguise him. They are surprised, that so great efforts have been made to find his place of concealment, because if any approach had been made to it by a detective, that would have been a signal for the child's instant destruction. They claim, however, that no detective ever had the slightest clue or trace of him since he was stolen, and defiantly give two more proofs

that they took and still have him. They say that the chances are one against ten thousand of my ever getting him, except by paying the ransom, and that if they go to Europe, he neither will be taken with them nor set at liberty, and again warn me against dealing falsely with them. They state that they were then in Lansingburg, above Troy, New York; but do not know where they will post this letter, as they will leave that place on this day.

The main points in this letter that have not been previously stated are the desire to satisfy us that they were the real abductors, without incurring any risk of being discovered. Their guard on this point had been perfect from the beginning, and continued so, notwithstanding their many and long letters. This fear of detection deterred them from sending to us part of CHARLEY'S clothing, which could not be forwarded without great risk of affording a clue to their hiding-place.

Very careful and long-continued search was made in Trenton for the hat which CHARLEY wore, and which they say was lost there on the night of July 2d. Mayor Breist, of that city, not only advertised for it, but instructed his police officers to inquire for it at every house on Bridge street; at all the schools, and of persons from the country who come to the city to attend market; but it was not found. The ribbon described as having been tied around CHARLEY'S head to keep the hair out of his eyes, had not been thought of by the nurse who had dressed him on the afternoon when he was taken away, and was therefore not mentioned in any description that had been given of his

clothing. When our attention was called to it in this letter, we found that his nurse had used a narrow pale pink ribbon edged with purple, a part of which was in the house, and corresponded to the description in the letter.

In all the previous letters, when the kidnappers spoke of having seen CHARLEY, they said he had not been disguised; in this one, however, it is stated that it was necessary, for the sake of precaution, to dress him in girl's clothing, and to cut off his hair; thus showing that with all their professed feeling of confidence that he could not be found, they adopted every means to prevent his being recognized. The letter of August 26th was dated at Albany, and postmarked Rondout, N. Y. This one is not dated, and although they say they were in Lansingburg, above Troy, at the time of writing it, it bears the postmark of New York city.

Bad and torturing as are the letters of the abductors in this chapter, yet they are so much more mild in tone than any that had preceded them, that I felt a degree of relief from the terrible anxiety which had been occasioned by the others; and having some confidence that the real kidnappers were known, and that it could not be long before they would be taken, I was buoyed with the hope, that soon our dear little boy would be found and restored to his home.

CHAPTER VIII.

SUGGESTIONS FROM SPIRITUALISTS AND CONVICTS— SEARCH IN TRENTON, NEW JERSEY.

IN addition to the ordinary means employed to discover the kidnappers and find CHARLEY, almost every conceivable mysterious agency has been suggested by persons who were interested in testing different theories, or who believed the desired result could be reached by invoking the aid of more subtle influences, and were desirous to try their skill in unraveling the mystery.

Many persons have come to me with information said to be obtained through the medium of spirits, suggesting that the matter should be investigated. But their information was generally so vague and indefinite that it was impossible to examine it, even had there been a disposition to do so. Besides, no two persons who had consulted different mediums gave the same direction in which to look for the child.

In consequence of the wide-spread interest taken in the recovery of CHARLEY, there never has been a better opportunity to give to the world practical evidences of the usefulness of either clairvoyance or spiritualism than this case affords; and could the place in which the child is concealed be discovered through information derived from either of these sources, there would be

something substantial for the faith of the skeptical to rest upon.

The letters received on these subjects I can count by hundreds, many of them from persons who have not full confidence in being able to accomplish everything; yet, in order to experiment, some ask for a small piece of any garment worn by CHARLEY, and not since washed.

A single instance will be given to show how persons who entertain the belief that the spirits of the departed communicate matters connected with the present life to professed mediums, and how they have utterly failed in this case to reveal anything that has been of any practical benefit, and how willing the votaries of said belief are to adopt any theory rather than acknowledge that they have been misled or deluded.

A gentleman from New York City called on me, and stated he had a great desire to assist me in finding my little boy; that he was well acquainted with a lady of intelligence and good Christian character, who was possessed of extraordinary powers as a spiritual medium, and that she had told him some remarkable things in which he was personally interested. He also stated that he would like to give her an opportunity of testing her powers in tracing my little son, and that to do it, he would require some article of clothing which the child had worn. At first I declined letting him have anything; but he was so earnest, and expressed his confidence so strongly, that he would very soon be able to inform me where the child was secreted, or what had become of him, that I finally gave him what he desired. Before leaving he said he would let me know from time to time of the progress made.

The first letter I received from him says that the medium was greatly affected in the examination, as the magnetism or influence surrounding the child was exceedingly bad; but the decision is, that the controlling spirit or influence will find the child whether it is dead or alive. The second letter says, "The spirit who has undertaken this search has been very diligent ever since the examination of the little dress you gave me. He commenced the search by looking through the city of New York, and reported that he looked in every house and hunted in and about the city, and has continued the search night and day. He requested me to say to you, not to go to any further expense in looking for your boy, as he is now looking for his remains. He says he shall find them, it is only a matter of time, and we are likely to receive the information in regard to the fate of CHARLEY any day. I suppose all that I have written to you appears like the ravings of a fevered brain, and I certainly can appreciate your views and feelings, as you are not conversant with the philosophy of modern spiritualism, or the laws governing spiritual communion; nevertheless, what I have written are facts, and I hope in a few days to present you with positive proof." About two months after receiving this letter, of which the above is an extract, I received the following, as the result of this interview with the spirits:

CHRISTIAN K. ROSS.—*Dear Sir:*—Agreeably to my promise, made to you last fall, I will now give the result of the search for your little son by Menomonee, an Indian spirit, through the medium of Mrs. ———, late of Chicago. Menomonee reports that he has found your little boy; he has seen and talked with him and his attendant several times; but he is in the spirit home, cheerful and happy. His attendant is a German

woman, and a relative of the family, is about forty-five years of age, and while in earth-life was a cripple. He said her name was Josephine.

I would like to know whether you recognize the woman by the description given. I have tested him many times, and have invariably found him correct. I would be pleased to hear from you, and if you have any questions to ask, I will submit them and get the information you desire, if possible. I remain yours with respect,

——— ———.

As I now heard for the first time that there was a relative of the family who was a German woman and a cripple while living, the conclusion was that the only point of the revelation that could be tested having proved false, the other parts were equally unworthy of belief. Besides, if the child was deceased, they failed to say where his remains were to be found.

The field for the search has been so wide that mystics of all kinds have offered their services, or voluntarily sent the results of their mysterious processes. Astrologers, fortune-tellers, dreamers, somnambulists—in fact there can scarcely be named a secret profession, from some of whose believers I have not received communications, asking me to test its powers. In a few instances letters have been received so carefully written that it was impossible to determine whether the persons writing them did or did not have reliable information. A case of this kind occurred that caused considerable trouble and expense. A letter from one of the Western States was sent to the Mayor of the city, which is as follows:

MAYOR OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA.

SIR:—If Mr. Christian K. Ross will consult me, he can hear something to his advantage in regard to his lost son. No money asked. Apply immediately by letter. ——— ———.

To which I replied, asking the person to write to me

what information she had, and received the following answer:

MR. CHRISTIAN K. ROSS.—*Dear Sir:*—Your letter is at hand. Your child is alive and in good health now. He is in Middlesex county, New Jersey. He is with a person who lives on or near Raritan Bay. You can find your child by going to New Brunswick. Be cautious in your search. He is near the mountains, and within seven miles of New Brunswick, in a northeasterly direction from the town. The child has been in various places; but most of the time near to Staten Island, and Sandy Point, and Amboy. He is among a nest of smugglers, whose line of business lies along the Raritan and Delaware rivers. The fear of being punished for the crime has caused them to detain the child. Start to look for him on the 7th or 13th of April, and you will find out, and your boy will be found. Have you ever searched in that part of the country? From one who wishes to befriend you.

Signed, ——— ———

In my answer to the above letter I inquired how the writer acquired the information she professed to have, and asked for more specific directions to make the search for the child. To which she replied as follows:

MR. C. K. ROSS.—*Dear Sir:*—Your letter is at hand. As to how I obtained the information I cannot tell you; as much depends on this mystery; but I will explain all when you have your child with you safe at home. I do not mean for you to search all over the country. Do not take out a search warrant. See a man by the name of ——— living northwest of the Raritan Bay. The child will be found out on the highway, about seven miles northwest of Raritan Bay, in a mountainous country, and not far from a cave or mine. This portion of the country is not often frequented by strangers, and the child is allowed outdoor privileges. In regard to this affair, go on the 13th of May. May God crown your journey with success.

Yours with respect, ——— ———.

The only thing that excited any suspicion that the letters were written by a person who was practicing some kind of fortune-telling, was that a certain day was fixed on which to start on the search. The locality named has always been regarded as one to which the

child might have been taken, and two of the letters from the abductors were dated New Brunswick. Its geography was correctly described, and many points in her letters gave reason for a belief that her information might have been obtained from some one residing in northern New Jersey. Nevertheless I wrote, asking her in good faith to give me the source of her information, whether obtained through a spiritualistic or any other mysterious agency. At the same time I wrote to the sheriff of the county, making inquiry of him about the writer. From the woman I received the following reply:

MR. C. K. ROSS.—*Dear Sir*:—Your letter is at hand. With regard to a medium, I know nothing of the nature of such; had I not known what I was talking about, I should not have written to you. Not having asked a fee for my information, I was actuated solely by sympathy with a mother in such a sad event. Had you placed confidence in what I wrote you, there would have been no cause for regret; and not thinking it necessary to write to you any more, I will close by expressing kindest sympathy. Yours truly, ——— ———.

On receiving this letter I went to New Brunswick, and with the chief of police of that city and a detective, started on a tour to find if possible the person named in her letter. After several days' travel along the Raritan river and the mountains above New Brunswick, we returned without finding the person; but continued the search through the mining region of New Jersey, until we became satisfied that no strange child had been brought there. About a month after writing to the sheriff, I received an answer from him, saying that the woman who had written to me had some reputation as a fortune-teller, and in some cases had divined very successfully. He said she had not traveled much, and

knew little of localities except what she had learned from history and geography, but that her memory was very good. Thus by the cunning of this woman in declining to give the way by which she had received her professed information, it became necessary to examine into her reports, as nothing presenting the smallest appearance of the most remote probability has been permitted to pass by without thorough investigation.

My first and only visit to a professional fortune-teller was in connection with this search, and was brought about in the following way. I received a letter from New York City written in German, and in very good handwriting. Translated, it reads as follows:

NEW YORK.

MR. C. K. ROSS.—Since the first announcement of the abduction of your son, I have daily perused the reports in the papers bearing on the case with great interest, and among other matters I noticed that different persons professed, either by letter or personally, to render assistance for the recovery of the child. But, probably for fear of humbug, or perhaps at the suggestion of the police, or for other causes, you have refused to accept any of their services, thinking, no doubt, that these persons had nothing but their own pecuniary interest in view. In consequence of these suppositions, on my part I concluded to wait until quietness had been restored in your family, prior to making the following propositions for the recovery of your child. I do this to dispel any idea of humbug that you may entertain. I have, for years, devoted myself to the study of Mesmerism, and have found that the thoughts of mankind are brought into unison by it; on the one hand soothing and hopeful, and on the other just the reverse, providing you formally believe in the same. Should you decide to accept, it will be necessary to see you personally and have a consultation. Awaiting your answer,

I am yours very respectfully, ——— ———.

The neighborhood in New York from which the letter came has always been regarded as suspicious, and it was thought that possibly an effort might be made through some such means as this letter indicated to

negotiate for the return of the child. For these reasons, I replied to to it as follows:

PHILADELPHIA.

MADAM.—I have no knowledge of the science of Mesmerism, and would like to know more about it before making experiments. You will favor me by giving fuller explanation.

Respectfully yours, C. K. Ross.

I received in return a long letter written in English. The substance of it was, that she did not practice mesmerism, there was an error in translating; it should have been *sympathy*, which she described as the *firm* belief on and in something that we would like to know or find, and if minds can be brought into unison, we may, when everything else fails, get a clue and find the object we desire. An incident is related of aid given to a lady in recovering a son who had been lost for seven years. The letter closes by saying, "Should you wish to try this, you are to come here, as I do not intend to charge you anything until you find some positive traces of your child, when the reward shall be left entirely with you. Hoping you will not misunderstand me." To this letter I made no reply, as it did not enlighten me in regard either to mesmerism or sympathy. But being in New York with a detective officer, in passing through the neighborhood where the writer of these letters lived, I proposed to the officer to call on her, and try to find out if she knew anything that might be of use to us. I had forgotten her name and the street; but by inquiry we soon found that a person believed to be a fortune-teller had moved into the neighborhood very recently, and had her name on a small sign. The person giving us the information remarked, "These people only put up the name, as it is against the law to tell

their business on a sign." Finding the sign, and recognizing the name we sought, the officer knocked at the basement front door; there was no response; we entered the hall, and knocked at the first door after entering, and got no reply. The officer went to the next door and knocked, and at the same time opened the door and walked in—I followed; before I got into the room I heard a voice saying, "Get out of this, go into the next room, I'll soon be there." We at once complied, and in a few minutes the old woman made her appearance. I introduced myself, and told her that I desired to know in what way she proposed to aid me in recovering my little son. She said that she could not speak very good English; but would explain the way the best she could. She said, "You must believe that there is a sympathy exists between you and your child. I propose to use that to bring him back." She then desired me to give the full name and date of the birth of the child, and after finishing her story said she had written another letter for me, and handing it to me said, "Do you believe I can do what I say?" I replied, "No, but I would like to ask you some questions." I asked her where she had lived before coming to this house, whether she knew several persons whom I named; and finding she knew nothing of practical use, I left her, promising on my return home to read her letter and reply to it, which I did as follows:

PHILADELPHIA.

MADAM.—As I promised yesterday to reply to the letter you handed me, after I had it translated, I now fulfil my promise. As I understand, by your conversation as well as by your letters, you require that I should believe in the system or process by which you purpose to restore my child, I confess I have not a particle of faith in charms, astrology, or any

system that professes to obtain knowledge of things unknown or concealed. I do not believe that God reveals to professionals more than to others, if as much. Thanking you for your expressions of sympathy,

I am yours, C. K. Ross.

There is one letter in my possession which, I suppose, relates to that which might properly be called witchcraft. It certainly advises a very curious mode to defeat the abductors in their purposes and to recover CHARLEY. It is written in German and the translation is as follows:

DEAR FRIEND.—In your present situation I am deeply touched, and, if possible, will render you my assistance to regain your child. I have read in a small book how the robbers wanted to extort money from you. If you follow my advice you shall have your child, without any ransom, in a very short time. But you must have faith in the works of God, which will result in the restoration of your flesh and blood.

Buy a spring chicken that has not laid an egg (but do not buy it of a woman); kill the chicken at night, without being seen or heard; cut out the chicken's heart on Friday, but nothing else. Take the heart in the left hand. You must first lay seven skewers (new) on the table. Hold the heart in the left hand and run around the table. Then take one skewer with the right hand, in the name of *God*, the *Father*, *Son* and *Holy Ghost*, then pierce the skewer from the top through the middle of the heart, and say "As I am piercing the heart of an innocent hen by this thrust, so shall the thrust pierce the heart of the guilty robber who took my flesh and blood."

The second skewer you have to pierce through the front part of the heart, and say, "This thrust shall pierce the robber's soul, until there is restored what I have lost." The third skewer you pierce through the heart and say, "You daring robber, if you intend to live you have to give back to me my (here you add the name of the boy). The fourth skewer you pierce from the other side and say, "It stands to you, robber, for life or death; what is not thine is mine." The fifth skewer from the bottom of the heart, and say, "Five wounds Jesus was carrying, and you robbers shall be stricken by them, in the name of *God* the *Father*, *Son* and *Holy Ghost*."

Sixth skewer pierce from the top of the right side and say, "The innocent chicken's blood shall bring your deeds to light." The seventh

skewer from the top of left side and say, "Seven pierces shall have your heart until you restore the little child, which you have taken; and if you do not do so you shall fall away like Boricates and that tree which God cursed."

Dear Friend Ross, if you do as I have written to you, they must give you back your own flesh and blood within twenty-one days, for the robbers will fall away and find no rest.

After you have pierced the heart with seven skewers, you must burn it the same night, just when the clock strikes twelve—throw it in the fire in the name of the *Father, Son* and *Holy Ghost*. Amen.

But nobody must know anything about it but God alone. If it is God's will, you shall have your child within the stated time, and should you not have it within the twenty-one days, do the same as first mentioned, but with the power of the devil, and you will have your child sure. That person who stole your child comes in your store a great deal to find out what you say and do; therefore be very quiet, so that he cannot work against this undertaking. When you have your child restored, then I will learn about it. I shall make myself known, and let you know who helped you. I have already helped a great many persons. Sending you my best respects, and hoping you will have courage that nothing will happen to you. Your most obt servant, ——— ———.

These few incidents and letters have been introduced to show that persons entertaining every kind and shade of opinion, regarding the finding out of hidden things, have been interested in trying, by their own peculiar way, to discover where CHARLEY may be concealed. Moreover, it is proper to mention them, as forming part of my narrative.

A very large proportion of persons of these classes, who have called upon me to offer their services, or to recommend me to see others supposed to be skilled in their profession, were not professionals themselves, but were actuated by sincere motives to render assistance in the search. So in all the correspondence with these persons, the same expressions of kindness, sympathy, and honesty of purpose are manifested; and answers

have generally been sent, either by forwarding a circular and photograph, or by writing, to let them know their letters were received and their interest in the case appreciated. We have felt that respect was due to all who had taken enough interest to write us, whatever their views might be as to the best way to discover the kidnappers, or to find the child.

Many convicts, confined in jails and penitentiaries, who had learned some of the facts concerning the abduction, and the great interest felt everywhere to discover the perpetrators of the deed, claimed to be able to tell who were the abductors, or where CHARLEY could be found. These men generally withheld the important part of the information which they professed to have, hoping thus to obtain a pardon, or be released from confinement, before giving all the points; but when their stories were obtained and sifted, they proved, in every instance, to be either wholly false or in no way relating to my case. Several instances of this kind occurred, to which some interest is attached.

A man confined in Sing Sing prison, writes to the Chief of Police of this city as follows:

SING SING PRISON, *September 7th, 1874.*

MR. KENNARD H. JONES.—*Dear Sir:*—I write this letter to let you know that I am sure that I know the getter-up of the Ross case, and when you read my statement you cannot deny that I have just reasons for my belief. Some time ago I was in your city, and I was there to help to steal a child. There was another man and myself in the plot. The man to whom I refer was the one who wanted me to go into it. I'll admit that I would have gone into it if everything had been carried on in my way. My plan was to leave the child where some one could pick her up, if we could not get the money out of the parents. The man who was at the head of the job did not wish to let the child go, and gave me the following reasons: "If we place the child on the street

so that some one can pick her up and return her to her parents, it will kill us in the next job. If the parents of this child don't come down, it's my intention to give the next child's parents warning, that it will be better for them to settle at once, for if they do not, their child will find the same end as the former stolen child." It is needless for me to give you the rest of his plans. It is enough to tell you that his intentions were to put the child out of the way, or, in plain words, to kill it. This was too much for me, for although I am as hard as the general run of cross men, etc. If this party had the least doubt of me going back on the job, I know full well that he never would have told me his intentions. He had good reasons for thinking me his man for any kind of a job, for I was just out of prison, and he knew that I was ready to go into almost anything that would bring me a good stake, etc., etc.

Now I am so sure of this being the same man, that I am willing to get a whipping if my story don't turn out true. I assure you the boys do get their jackets dusted here if they don't behave. I don't want to get mine cleaned, so you can depend on every word I write in this letter, etc.

There is a reward of $20,000 offered by the city of Philadelphia. It is a big sum of money, and some men would do almost anything to get it; as for myself I don't care a straw for it, but my liberty I prize greatly. So if you will guarantee to pay the warden of Sing Sing Prison $5,000, and do your best to procure my pardon for the sixteen months that I have yet to stay here, I will give the name of the man I refer to. I do not ask this until you arrest the party and recover the child. I would advise you to let no one know anything about this letter, except those you can depend upon. Your humble servant, ——— ———.

This letter was sent to Supt. Walling, who instructed Capt. Hedden to investigate the matter. Capt. Hedden reports as follows:

NEW YORK, *Sept. 19, 1874.*

K. N. JONES, CHIEF OF POLICE, PHILA.—*Dear Sir:*—Supt. Walling placed your letter, in relation to Brown, in my hands, and I, this day, went to Sing Sing and saw him. The man whom he suspects is White. Brown was in your city summer before last, and was acquainted with White; and in October of that year, White put up a job to steal a child belonging to a wealthy family. The child was taken on pleasant days to a park by a servant girl. White made the acquaintance of the girl, and used to treat her while she was out with the child. It was planned

for Brown to carry the child off, while White diverted the attention of the girl. Brown got frightened, and the job fell through. White told him that he had another similar job on hand; but that he awaited this one to be done first. White lived three years ago in your city. A Detective has been to see him, and has written to him that White could not be the man, because he (White) has been in a lunatic asylum for five months. I wish you would let me know, through Supt. Walling, if White is in an asylum or not, and how he came there. If there is anything else you wish to find out from Brown, I will see him again.

Respectfully Yours, HENRY HEDDEN, *Capt. 13th Div.*

There is a striking similarity in the plan proposed for the abduction of a child and getting a ransom, in the letter of Brown to the Chief of Police, to that adopted by the real abductors; but the person accused of suggesting the plan had been in an asylum a long time before the abduction.

I received a letter from Iowa so badly written that it is difficult to understand what the writer intended to say. The substance of it, however, is that the writer knows where my son is, and wants me to come and see him immediately; that my coming to see him will be the only way to find him.

An answer was sent, asking more definite information, and a second letter received, acknowledging the receipt of my note, and insisting I should go to Iowa, and he would tell me all about the child, and that unless I saw him, I should never know any more.

This last letter I enclosed to the sheriff of the county, and asked him if he knew the writer, and if so to find out whether he had any information that would justify me in going to Iowa. The sheriff returned the letter with the following endorsement: "The man who wrote the within letter is confined in jail here on a charge of murder, and has been sentenced to be hung for the

crime. He is regarded in the community as a notorious liar; he is well known by all the officers and leading citizens about here, and would not be believed by any one under oath. It is next to impossible for him to speak the truth. Don't give yourself any uneasiness on account of what he says." This man does not appear to have had any motive in writing to me, and the only purpose seems to have been to indulge in the habit of which the sheriff accused him.

Another man confined in Auburn prison, New York, stated that he formerly associated with Mosher, and knew his haunts, habits, and associates, and he could find CHARLEY ROSS; insisting that it was necessary for him to be released from prison to make a personal search. However, when pressed by the officers to give some evidence of his ability to accomplish what he proposed to do, he utterly failed to convince them that he knew anything about the matter. The statements made by prisoners have always been regarded as unreliable; but particular care has been taken to sift them, and find out the motives that prompted them. No prisoner, however, has been found who could give the least information about the abductors, except such points as could be learned from the newspapers.

On the 14th of September, the following personal was published in the New York *Herald:*

John—Hat not found. Am ready to pay sum demanded, but only through an attorney. He dare not betray you. Name one anywhere.

To this the following letter was received in reply, September 25th:

[No. 19.]

NEW HAVEN, Sept. 23.—*Mr. Ros.*—we did not see yu last answer til to day. we was in new brunswic british province and cold not see the

New York *herald* we went there to se if the law would permit us to make a symultaneous change with yu but we find no such change can be efected with safety to our selves. you ask to transact the bisiness through an attorney this is to absurd to think of for one minute that man does not exist that we cold trust to receive that money but one of our own party and we are not wiling that one of our party shall become recognizable by any living person. as we now stand we can confront any one with impunity and are determined to keep so. if you be convinced that we have him and want to ransom him why did you not agree to our proposition. we have told yu if the money was lost in transit tu us it would be our los should yu folow our instructions and yu get yu child. Mr. Ros we cannot show the child to yu and we cannot give you any more proof than we have; yu must except this as the only alternitive left you to ransom him or murder him, for one or the other wil and shal take place before many days. Yu as his father have been mor cruel to him than we have. We told yu that his place of cencealment was such that no living being could find it and that it was not a fit place for any one to be in the length of time he has been there. We do not keep him there to punish him; your detectives have made it much worse for him than he would be had they not such a close search for him; he has kept his health wonderful considering his close confinement. We do not see him often or even hear from him. The last time we se him he had been ailing with pain from stoppage of urin he would go 24 and 30 ours without making water and then he would cry with pane when he would urinate, but his custodian got him som medicine which helped him. we tel yu positively Mr. Ros his hiding place must be his tomb unless you bring him out with the ransom for we have a settled plan to act upon and we shal never digress from it and that is death or ransom. Yu will find we speak truth in this for once if yu compel us to put him to death yu shall receive a letter in 24 ours after, wher yu wil find his body. as soon as we cop another kid and it wil be a millionaire this time your child must die. we wil then see if he wil be so heartless as to let his child die. you detectives perhaps tel yu that yu wil pay yu money and get no child then but we dont do bisiness in that way we dont want him much longer neither dead or alive. if yu pay for him yu shall have him safe and sound. if not yu shal have him dead. so you can rest assured yu wil get him soon one way or the other. if die he must yu shal se that he has been dead but a few ours when yu git him then yu can thank yu friends for their kind advise. Ros this is the last advise we wil offer yu if yu reject it yu can make up yu mind that the

day of grace is forever lost to save your child. Ros if yu want to save yu child yu must comply with our terms and yu yourself be our Attorney for we wil have no other and we are absolutely determined on that point. when yu see fit to change yu money for yu child in the way we direct yu can answer this through the *herald* personal New York. we shall keep up this unnessary correspondence no longer your asking for more evidence that we have him looks to us as if it was a scheme of Mr. Haines to entrap us, but mr hains will never have that pleasure Mr Ros you must be convinced by this time that no reward however large can effect or influence our party we told yu this at the first and we told yu how hopelessly it was for yu to search for him when we had taken such great labor to find a suitable place to conceal him and the imposebility for any one to find him in our possession when we have it fixed so we can lanch him into eternity at an instant's warning, and yet yu consent that a reward shall be offered to induce some one who has no right to approach his hiding place but perhaps yu look upon this as romance or fiction yet fiction is sometimes more stranger than truth. Ros—yu should be your own counciler in getting yu child and then let the detectives council yu how to get us, take our advice for once and se if we do not give you the best council—that is get yu child at any price on any terms we offer yu regardless of all other advise—we have told yu and now repeat it that this thing is drawing to a final crises. Mr Ros when yu conclude to act as our atty and meet us on our terms then yu can answer this as directed we shal henceforth notice nothing else from yu.

The interval between the publication of the last personal and the date of the letter in reply to it, the abductors say was caused by their having visited New Brunswick, in the British Provinces, to learn whether a simultaneous exchange could be made there. They profess to have been satisfied that this could not be accomplished. They decline to act through an attorney, and assert that they will not confide in any one, believing they are secure from detection, but will keep their own secret. In answer to the first part of our personal, "Hat not found," they refuse to send any other proof than those already given that they have CHARLEY, and

state that unless I ransom him I will be his murderer. They re-assert that his place of concealment is not a fitting place for any one to be in for any length of time; yet he is not kept in it to punish him, but of necessity, in consequence of the close search which has been made for him. They say his health has not been injured by his close confinement, but he had suffered temporarily from a complaint incident to childhood; that his place of concealment will be his tomb, unless ransomed, as they have a settled plan to carry out, from which they will not deviate; should he not be ransomed, he will certainly be put to death, and that within twenty-four hours after I shall know where to find his body.

They profess to be arranging to steal another child, and when that is done my child must die, so that they can refer to his death in order to intimidate the parents into paying the ransom. They suspect that the asking for more evidence that they have CHARLEY is a scheme of Captain Heins, who the writer asserts shall never have the pleasure of entrapping them. They repeat that the place in which the child is secreted has been selected with great care, and it is impossible for any one to find him; it is so arranged that at a moment's warning he can be destroyed without the possibility of their ever being discovered. They advise me to redeem CHARLEY, regardless of what others may say, and after that to allow the detectives to endeavor to find them. The letter concludes by saying that when I have decided to be my own attorney, and agree to their terms, I may notify them by another personal.

This letter is dated New Haven, Connecticut, and

shows that the abductors did not remain in one place for any length of time after they knew they were suspected of having committed the crime. Whether they went to the British Provinces has not been found out; but there was sufficient time to have gone there and returned, there being an interval of seventeen days between the dates of the last two letters. They realized that public sentiment had been so outraged by the crime that it would be unsafe for them to entrust the exchange to an attorney or any one else, and their only security lay in keeping the matter under their own control. The complaint which CHARLEY is said to have suffered from had not been thought of by any member of the family since he was stolen, until this letter called our attention to it. It was then remembered that on one or two occasions he had complained of pain, which, however, yielded to mild remedies, without our calling in a physician for treatment. Notwithstanding the long period during which the abductors were unable to get the ransom money, and their own knowledge that they were suspected of having kidnapped the child, yet they persistently adhered to the original plan, prearranged with all the skill and cunning which could be devised. They continue to lacerate my feelings by repeating the sufferings my little son was compelled to endure, and what would be the final result if I failed to comply with their demands.

On the return home of Mrs. Ross's brother, Henry Lewis, from Europe about the first of September, although he had been informed of the stealing of CHARLEY, and of many of the facts connected with it, yet he desired to know what theories concerning the abduc-

tors were held by those who were familiar with the case; also what had been done, and what was being done at that time, to find the kidnappers and to recover the child. This information he desired so that he could decide what action he should take, and what he should recommend to be done in the future. I referred him to Mr. Bullitt and Mr. McKean, who had been made acquainted with everything that I knew of the matter, and who had studied the case, and were aiding me in every way possible, not only by their counsel, but by constant personal efforts. He was also referred to those who were interested and actively working in it, viz: Captain Heins, the committee of citizens, and the Pinkerton detective agency. After he had learned from these gentlemen all they could tell him, I related to him everything I knew about the matter, and requested him to see Superintendent Walling in New York, adding that I believed he had the only clue I knew of, which appeared to me to be correct, and while it was a mere suspicion, yet there seemed to be so much in favor of its being right, that before he did anything I desired he should hear upon what the suspicion was based. On his return from New York he expressed the opinion that the suspicions which were entertained there that Mosher and Douglas (alias Henderson and Clark) were the abductors, seemed to be plausible, and he had urged Superintendent Walling to work the case up; but at the same time he did not propose to rely alone on that clue, but should advocate looking into everything having any bearing on the case.

Mr. Lewis now entered actively upon the search. To him all my correspondence was sent. He met the

committee of citizens daily, and conferred with the authorities here and in New York, whenever it was required. He relieved me during the month of September, by assuming a great deal of the labor and responsibility, which had fallen on me, and by acting for me in many cases which came to his knowledge. I was not directly in communication with Supt. Walling, his official correspondence about the case being with the authorities in the city; therefore, I was not acquainted with the detail of the operations of the New York Police Department. But having so much at stake, I went to New York many times to learn what progress was being made in the search for the suspected party. Supt. Walling assured me that he was doing everything that possibly could be done towards getting the men; that he knew they were moving about from place to place, near to New York city; that their arrest was simply a question of a short time, and they could not much longer elude his officers, who were following their tracks very closely. On my last interview with him in September, he stated that he could get Douglas at any time, and if I wished him to be arrested, he thought he could have him within two days. I replied that, "In view of the threats contained in the letters of the abductors, that the life of the child would be taken in case one of their party was arrested, I feared to run the risk of having Douglas taken without Mosher being arrested at the same time." To which he replied, "We will have them both; we know them and will pursue them until we find them."

While this trail was being followed up in New York city, Mayor Briest, of Trenton, with the authorities in

that city, were earnestly engaged in working up a supposed clue in that city, which at one time bade fair to result favorably; but which after much labor and time had been spent, proved to be wrong. Mayor Briest writes to Capt. Heins as follows:

TRENTON, N. J., *September 5, 1874.*

DEAR SIR:—I certainly feel a great interest in the Ross case, for it has been impossible for me to relieve my mind of the impression, that the man we have under surveillance in this city has some connection with it. Yet I may be mistaken, as others have been, whose impressions have been equally strong, &c., &c. Truly Yours,

BRIEST, *Mayor.*

He again writes, September 18th:

CAPTAIN WILLIAM. R. HEINS, DETECTIVE, PHILADELPHIA.—*Dear Sir:*—The man we have been watching, so far has outwitted us. He left his residence on Monday morning about 3 o'clock, with carpet-bag, duster, and umbrella, apparently to take one of the early trains; and passed where he must have known a policeman would see him. He gave the man who was watching him the slip, and again paraded by the City Hall about 9 a. m., with his duster and umbrella, but without his carpet-bag, etc. Our aim has been to arrest him when we are certain he is going to New York. But this morning, while the scouts were being sent out, word was sent to the Marshal that he had jumped on the Pittsburg Express, which passes this city at 8 A. M., for New York. It does not generally stop at this city; but this morning happened to slow up to let off a railroad official, and thus made an opening for him to get away. The mention of that hat being lost on Bridge street in this city, and the actions of our man to ascertain whether his movements were watched, etc., has impressed me that there is a connection somewhere between the two. Of course, I am free to acknowledge that I may be mistaken; but will not be long in doubt, if he returns to make this city his headquarters, etc., etc. You have heard F——'s story, and are able to judge what there is in it. He seems to be very anxious and earnest about the matter; but in this Ross case, when a man gets an idea in his head about it, he seems unnaturally persistent about it until it touches bottom.

Yours truly, BRIEST, *Mayor.*

October 1st, again he writes:

CAPT. WM. R. HEINS.—*Dear Sir*:—Our man is away, and we have no trace of him since Saturday. As the personals look as though matters were coming to a focus, I would be obliged if you would keep me posted as to the reception of letters, that we may not grope too much in the dark, whether our suspicions are well founded or not, etc., etc.

Yours truly, BRIEST, *Mayor*.

Again, on the 30th of October, he writes:

CAPT. WM. R. HEINS.—*Dear Sir*:—Yours of the 3d received, with thanks for the information. Our man is still away, and my suspicions of his connection with the affair grow stronger instead of lessening, in the light of the few facts shed upon what appears to be the climax of this "unholy crime." If the money is to be paid for the child, and you will promptly advise us, we will take the responsibility of taking him, if he does not overreach us. We think he is in it, and that he will resort to his old express job, which he seems to have practiced for some ulterior design. However, I may be speculating too far.

Very truly yours, BRIEST, *Mayor*.

Again, October 27th, he writes:

CAPT. WM. R. HEINS.—*Dear Sir*:—Surface indications (as they say in mining parlance) have been very few with us lately, in regard to the missing child; and from not hearing from you, I had begun to think either that the child had been quietly returned, or that slow progress was being made in the negotiations to that end.

BRIEST, *Mayor*.

The man suspected of being connected with this crime was known also in New York, having been arrested in that city for stealing bonds; after pursuing him for a long time, we satisfactorily ascertained that he was not implicated in the abduction. These letters and extracts are given to show, whenever any degree of suspicion was entertained against a person who was known to be a criminal, how closely his movements were watched by the authorities in other cities, and how desirous they have been to assist in

finding the miscreants who had committed this "unholy crime."

At this stage of the history I was disabled for any further search for my little boy. The incessant strain upon mind and body for the past three months—the alternation of hope and fear—the anxious pursuit—the weary labor by day, and the sleepless nights—were surely a heavy burden to carry, without the heartless slanders and infamous calumnies which were coined and circulated about Mrs. Ross and myself. All these coming on like a flood made serious inroads upon my reasonably strong constitution, now weakened by intermitting fever contracted during my fearful and memorable trip to Albany, through the malarious swamps of New Jersey. For several weeks I had felt my strength yielding to the excessive tax upon my system, and for days was kept up only by force of will, strung to the greatest tension by longing for our lost darling. When the break came, it was sudden and overwhelming; both body and mind succumbed at the same time, and for nearly four months I was unable to give personal attention to this or any other subject. During that time my friends, who had been so closely identified with me in the great affliction, continued to give their attention to the search, and to them I am indebted for information of what was done during these long, weary, blank and clouded months of October, November, December and January.

CHAPTER IX.

LAST LETTERS FROM THE ABDUCTORS—THEIR TRAGIC DEATH—VIGOROUS SEARCH FOR CHARLEY.

ON the 29th of September the following "Personal" appeared in the New York *Herald:*

John, your terms are accepted. Name time between payment and delivery.

To which an answer was received as follows:

[No. 20.]

NEW BRUNSWIC, September 30.—*Mr. Ros:* yu have at length agreed to our terms. how much better would it have been for yu had yu complied at first. we told you at first there was no other alternitive left yu but to part with your mony or yu child for one or the other yŭ must, we told yu before it shal not exceed 10 ours from the time we receive the mony til yu receive yu child and yet it may be a few ours longer. we must have time to examine the money to see that yu have not got it secretly marked up. we tel yu for your own interest not to mark the notes in any way whatever for if you break the terms of agreement with us we shal then break it with yu and yu had much better keep your money for we tel yu positively we would not keep our word. we would not liberate the child. but on the other hand if yu come to us in good faith with the intention of parting with yu money for the sake of getting yu child and saving him from death then we pledge ourselves by all the powers that be sacred in heaven and earth yu shall have yu child saf and sound as soon as we can get him to yu with safety to ourselves we think we told yu once how we would return him tu yu. but this is the way we propose to do. we will take him to some ministers house at night put a label on him stating this is Charley Ros take him immediately to 304 Market st phil or washington lane germantown yu will find a sufficient sum in his pocket to pay yu for yu trouble no reward will be paid. we have sent word to his parents stating where he is. Mr. Ros we do

not intend the party where we leave him shall see us at all they will be perfect innocent so you should not give them any trouble. we will send you word immediately stating where he is left. but the probability is he will be brought home long before yu the get letter but this will make it perfectly safe and sure for yu to get him. Mr. Ros it is true yu have got tu rely entirely on our honor for the fulfilment of this part of the contract but you can rely with implicit confidence. bad as we are and capable of the blackest deeds yet we have some honer left. your large rewards have in a measure proved this there are 4 of us to divide the $20,000 among and either one of the 4 could went and got the whole amount to himself if he had been without principal. how easy could any one of the 4 went on the sly and had us all coped and revealed where the child was secreted but yu see we have not done it. we have no fear of one another though it were a million dollars. we have told yu for your own interest not tu mark the money which yu intend tu ransom your child with. keep faith with us and we will keep faith with yu and yu shal have yu child safe and sound in 10 or 12 ours. provide yourself with the amount in United States notes from 1 tu 10 in denomination. not national bank notes when yu are all prepared with this and are ready to meet us drop a word in the *herald* New York yu can take as many of yu friends as yu choose but do it quietly if yu want tu get yu child. Mr Ros first get yu child then let the detectives assist yu. yu see they have not the power to do anything. time has proved this and if yu rely upon them so it will ever prove. Mr Ros put yu child when yu get him on exhibition and yu wil relize all your money back in 6 months for there is not a mother in phila that will not pay a dollar to see him.

Throughout this letter it is apparent that the kidnappers feared either that it was not my purpose to give them the money, or that attempts would be made to deceive them in some way; hence they so frequently caution me against acting in bad faith towards them, and insist on receiving United States notes of *small* denominations. In all the previous letters they stated it would be to their interest to return CHARLEY after finding the money correct. In this one matter they claim credit for some principle, and, as evidence of it, say that there are four of them among whom the $20,000 is to

be divided, and that either of the four, by informing on the rest, could easily have obtained the whole reward offered by the Mayor; but they boast that they have kept faith with each other, and would have done so if fifty times as much had been offered. It was supposed by many persons that by offering a large reward one of the villains in the plot would be induced to inform on the rest; but they were so closely bound to each other that no such results followed. The time for the delivery of the child after receiving the money is again extended; at first it was fixed at five hours, then extended to ten, and now from ten to twelve hours, claiming an additional allowance to enable them to find the money correct. They state more particularly the way in which they propose to return CHARLEY, and suggest that I make a public exhibition of him to reimburse myself.

As stated in the last chapter, I was prevented from giving further attention to the search, but everything requiring examination here was looked into by the authorities and my friends, as well as the clue which the New York police had worked upon for so long a time. The detail of their operations I am not able to give. Not only were Westervelt's services engaged in the case, but also those of the person who gave the first information of his suspicions that Mosher and Douglas were the kidnappers. He with a number of police officers was continually employed in endeavoring to find the men.

Westervelt never would admit that he had seen the men, but professed always that he was looking for them, until Superintendent Walling learned that he had seen

them, and told him that he knew he had seen Mosher and Douglas. He then admitted that he had met them at two different times, but claimed he could not have informed the Superintendent in time to be of service to him.

On the 7th of October the following personal was published in the New York *Herald:*

John, the money is ready; state clearly and fully mode of payment and manner of delivery.

On the 16th of October an answer as follows was received, which was mailed in Newburg, New York, on the 15th, although written on 11th of October, and having a post-script dated the 15th:

[No. 21. Mailed at Newburg, N. Y., October 15, 1874. Received October 16, 1874.]

OCTOBER 11.—*Mr. Ros:* You say the money is ready how is it then we can't come to a speedy compromise if yu was anxious to get yu child and wiling to pay yu money then there is no trouble about it we are anxious to give him up but only on the conditions we have before told yu you ask again how we are to deliver him to yu we told yu in our last letter plainly how we would return him to yu is not that way satisfactory yu don't want us surely to turn him loose on the road at the ded our of night we wil never bring him to you personaly nor wil we ever take him to any one you appoint but we will take him to a strange family where it is least expected and where you will be sure to get him if the way of delivering him is not satisfactory to yu then we cannot come to terms for we are determined in delivering him to yu that no person shal see our face when we do go with him we shal be completely disguised yu ask to state plainly how yu are to pay the money that will be told yu at the proper time so far as the money is concerned that is imaterial to yu what disposal is made of it so long as yu comply with our demands which you already know all you have to do now in order to have yu child restorded to yu is to make up yu mind that yu have got to part with so many dollars and it maters not to yu what becomes of the money so long as it satisfies our demand we return yu the child. yu may have a doubt that yu may not then get yu child. we cannot give yu the child before we get the money for then we part with

every compulsion to make yu pay it. we cannot hand you the child as yu hand us the money for all the power and all the law is on your side. the thing is all embodied in a nutshell. the child is of no entrensic value to us whatever, any further than to compel yu to ransom him if yu pay the ransom and we do not give him up to yu would any one else give a dollar for their child when they would have no assurance whatever of getting him. yu certainly would not be fool enough to pay the ransom the second time when we had not kept faith with yu the first time but yu ask he might be dead and then we could not give him up—yes he might have been dead a dozzen times through your neglect to redeem him but as it hapens he has lived in spite of his close confinement again yu say we might hurried his death as we have threatened it so many times. That is true—we might but it has not come to that crisis yet so long as the inducement is held out of geting the ransom he is in a measure safe but there wil be a time when the inducement wil exaust itself when this death takes place it wil be our policy and interest to make it known to yu at once that others may be wiser than yu—if yu should pay the ransom and then not get yu child would any one else have faith enough in us to pay a ransom when Ros did not get his child after paying for him—Mr. Ros you can rest assured with all confidence when yu pay yu mony yu wil get yu child but it wil be imposible unless you do. yu have ben living in hope of geting him without the ransom but the detectives in the case are powerless. yu get a clue every few days or rather a false clue. only a few days ago yu child was seen in New Haven. i tel you positively and tu save you trouble and anxiety that yu child has not been seen by any human being since the third day of July other than the party who have been in charge we could not take him five miles without being arrested; when we return him to yu it will be in the night time if at all when yu hear yu child is seen here or there yu can have no faith in it. for he wil not be seen by any one while we have him that yu can rest assured of. yu say yu money is ready. are you ready to take a short journey and have this thing settled. Mr. Ros this continual correspondence looks to us as if it was but a ruse to get a clue to our whereabouts. We tel yu positively should they succeed in capturing one of us it would certainly prove death to yu child. Do yu believe it or not—whether or not it wil not alter our decree. If yu banish all hope of ever geting yu child til yu ransom him and drop the detectives yu wil then take a rational view of the thing and see it in its true light. We told yu we were going to urope last month; part of us did go, but we expect them back in few days and then

we can settle the business if yu are ready. We wil see the personals in the New York *herald.*

OCTOBER 15—we had almost concluded after writing this not to send it for you ask questions that answered planly—but we wil see what you want now—if yu are ready to pay we are ready to return the child to your satisfaction.

This letter is little else than a repetition of several already given. They, however, say the child is still living notwithstanding his close confinement, and declare his safety from a violent death so long as there is a prospect of getting the money. They also state that he has, since the 3d of July, been seen only by those having charge of him, and that when he is returned it will be in the night, by persons disguised, so that recognition will be impossible. They also say that should one of their party be captured the life of the child would certainly be taken. They suspect this correspondence is kept up on our part in order to get a clue to their whereabouts. This was our real object, but they kept moving about from place to place so frequently that it was not possible to keep pace with them.

The following letter was received from Superintendent Walling about this time, reporting his progress in the Mosher and Douglas investigation:

NEW YORK, *October 22, 1874.*

WM. R. HEINS, ESQ., CAPTAIN DETECTIVE POLICE, PHILADELPHIA.

—*Dear Sir:*—I saw my informant last night; he says that we are surely on the right track, but they have hopes of getting the child redeemed, and he has not been able to find where it is. I think any arrangements made with the kidnappers for the restoration of the child would be a public calamity; no child would be safe hereafter if it had parents or friends who could raise money. I am confident that I shall get the guilty parties and the child at some time not far distant, provided no compromise is made with them.

Very respectfully yours, etc.

GEO. W. WALLING, *Superintendent.*

And on the 28th of October he writes thus:

NEW YORK, *October 28, 1874.*

W. R. HEINS, CAPTAIN DETECTIVE POLICE, PHILADELPHIA.—*Sir:*—Yours of yesterday received. On Monday night Clark *alias* Douglas went to where they used to meet, but found the lager beer saloon closed. He inquired for Westervelt. I heard it yesterday morning, and about an hour afterwards Westervelt came and told me Clark had been inquiring for him. Of course I did not tell him I knew it; so I think Westervelt has kept faith with me.

I am satisfied that I could get Clark *alias* Douglas, as I have heard from him several times, but he was always alone., I do not want to get him without Mosher. I am in hopes of locating the child soon, as I now think Westervelt was mistaken in his suspicions of ———. There is another person we suspect as having custody of the child, as he has been missing since the disappearance, and he was intimate with them.

Yours, etc. GEO. W. WALLING, *Superintendent.*

He writes again on November 4th, 1874:

CAPTAIN HEINS.—*Dear Sir:*—Since you were here I have seen the man of whom I spoke to you about getting information of Mosher. He says some one has been to every place where Mosher used to go, and inquired for him, and that they all know he is wanted and what for, and that he is secreted. I also saw Westervelt, and accused him of having played me false. He swears he has not, and says that he has seen Douglas and could get him for me, but does not know where Mosher is. I am certain that they are the parties, and am equally certain that they will not harm the child.

I wish the boy's friends could make up their minds to defy the kidnappers; had they done so a month ago, I believe the child would now be at home with its mother. Nothing but the hope of gain and being able to make a bargain for their security, I am confident, causes them to keep possession of the child.

Yours truly,

GEO. W. WALLING, *Superintendent.*

Again, on November 12th, he says:

The parties are hard up and have come to the end of their tether. We are pushing them so hard that they dare not get out to do anything. I don't think Douglas will squeal unless we can get hold of him.

Yours, etc., GEO. W. WALLING, *Superintendent.*

Before the Superintendent succeeded in getting Westervelt's consent to help him to find Mosher and Douglas, he promised him that if he was successful he should have the full amount of the twenty thousand dollars reward offered for the abductors and the child. For some time Westervelt professed to be working for that object; but subsequently told Mr. Walling that he would not give information of his brother-in-law, but would "give Douglas away." The Superintendent hesitated to assume the responsibility of taking Douglas alone, knowing that Mosher was the principal in the plot. He feared that the threats made against the life of the child in the event of one arrest would be put into execution. He finally, however, directed Westervelt to put him in the way of getting Douglas. This Westervelt never did, although several opportunities were afforded, which became known at a subsequent time. In October Mr. Walling was informed that Mosher and Douglas were on a boat in some of the waters near New York, and wrote to Captain Heins, suggesting that a steam-tug be chartered and sent in search of them. The necessary funds were remitted, and Detective Wood of this city, with two officers from New York, and another person well acquainted with both the men to be sought and localities to be visited, were sent on a steam launch to carry out Superintendent Walling's plan. They went up the Hudson River as far as Newburg, examining all the creeks emptying into the river on both sides; returning they entered the East River and searched all the inlets and coves on both sides of Long Island Sound, and after being absent about eleven days returned without getting any trace of the fugitives.

Officers were detailed to watch Astoria ferry, reported by Westervelt as a place where the abductors might be found. He also informed the Superintendent of a restaurant where they had taken meals when in New York. After vainly watching these places for weeks the officers were withdrawn. On the 28th of October the following personal appeared in the New York *Herald:*

John, too sick to take journey. Will relative answer?

And on the 31st the following reply was received, dated Philadelphia:

[No. 22.]

PHILA Oct 31 Mr Ros we told you at the beginning of this bisnes we would deal with none but you the reason of this must be apparent to yu the fate of your child would depend upon your actions in dealing with us we know you would not intentionally sacrifice your child in breaking faith with us we told you in dealing with us you must act in good faith and any breach of faith on your part would be meeted out in certain death Mr Ros if you have any relation or friend that you can delegate to this important bisines then we are ready to deal with him we care not who he may be if it be mr hines or the states attorney—we are willing to negociate with him but mr Ros we want you not to deceive yourself in this bisines for we tell you plainly his acts will involve the life or death of your child we shall regard him as your substitute in every particular and hold the life of your child responsible for his actions. Mr Ros from your answers we understood you agree to the terms we previously dictated. send your substitute to New York tuesday 3rd november with the means to settle this bisines. remember the money must be in every particular as we directed for you can accomplish nothing with us in using any stratagem for we will not release the child under any other circumstances then your carrying out the terms in good faith with us it is unnecessary for us to pledge ourselves in any way in regard to the child being immediately returned to you. all we can do or say is —it shall be our first move to restore the child after we see the money is all right. we shall spare no trouble or expense in returning the child to you safely. though it cost us five thousand we would not hesitate to use it in order to return the child. but it will not cost us ten dollars and you shal have him as safe and sound as he was on the first day of July last

Phila.

Oct 31

Mr. Ros we told you at the beginning of this biznes we would deal with none — but you — the reason of this must be apparent to you — the fate of yr child would depend entirely upon your actions in dealing with us — we know you could not intentionaly sacrifice yr child in breaking faith with us — we told you in dealing with us you must act in good faith and any breach of faith on your part would be meeted out in certain death to your child

Mr Ros — if you have any relative or friend that you can delegate to transact this important biznes — then we are ready to deal with him we care not who he may be — if it be Mr. biner or the state attorney we are willing to negociate with him — but Mr. Ros — we want you not to deceive yourself in this biznes for we tell you plainly his act will involve the life or death of your child — we shal regard him as your substitute in every particular and hold the life of yr child responsible for his actions —

Mr. Ros — from yr answers we understand you agree to the terms we peremptorily dictated —

Send your substitute to New York on thursday 3rd november — with the means to settle this biznes — remember the money must be in every particular as we directed for you can accomplish nothing with us in using any stratagem for we will not

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REDUCED FAC-SIMILE OF LETTER NUMBER TWENTY-TWO.

release the child under any other circumstances
than your carrying out the terms in good faith
with us— . It is unnecessary for us to
like ourselves in any way in regard
to the child's being immediately restored
to you— all we can do or say is— it shall
be our first move to restore the child after
we see the money is all right—
we shall spare no trouble or expense
in returning the child to you safely— Though
cost us five thousand we would not
hesitate to use it in order to return the
child— but it will not cost us ten dollars
and you shall have him as safe and sound as he
was on the 1 day of July last when he was playing
on front of yr door with walter—
, your substitute on arriving in newyork
must put a personal in herald— say— John— we are
stopping at ——— hotel— with his name in full—

, Mr. Ros— you say the money is ready and yr substitute
is ready. and we are ready— then moment the 3rd
will prove or disprove the sincerity of your actions

Mr. Ros— you see by this we have come among you
once more

REDUCED FAC-SIMILE OF LETTER NUMBER TWENTY-TWO.

when he was playing in front of your door with Walter. your substitute on arriving in new York must put a personal in *herald*. say. John i am stoping at —— hotel with his name in full. Mr Ros you say the money is ready and your substitute. and we are ready. then November the 3d wil prove or disprove the sincerity of your action. Mr Ros you see by this we have come among you once more.

The abductors, holding the life of the child as the forfeit should there be an attempt at any deception on my part, were bold enough to say that any one, even Captain Heins or the district attorney, may act as my substitute in paying the money. They appoint November 3d as the day on which my substitute should be in New York. Previous to his going, they require to be notified at what hotel he would be, and also that his full name be placed to the advertisement. They say after the money is found to be right they will return the child regardless of cost, as safe and sound as he was on the day he was taken away, and boastingly call attention to the fact of their being in Philadelphia. On the 3d of November another personal was inserted in the New York *Herald*, as follows:

John, change address of personals. Relative will not sign his name in full.

And on the same day the following answer was sent from New Brunswick, New Jersey:

[No. 22½.]

NEW BRUNSWICK, November 3—*Mr. Ros.* it looks very strange to us that you should quible about the name to address us. is your object to keep the detectives informed of our whereabouts by having us writing you so often. it looks so but time will prove all things. our advice is to you and it is better than all the detectives combined can give you is to act squarely in this bisnes if you have any regard for your child. we think we have cautioned you enough on this point. we are satisfied the detectives are working the thing up to their interest we know all about their

doings and how they are bleeding you and Mr louis out of your money you will open your eyes to their games. by the by we could tell you much about them but our place is to keep mum and yours to investigate before you give more money out. it makes us jealous to see you pay out your mony foolishly when they can give you nothing in return but a parcel of fabricated lies. we confes we are bleeding you to—but we have an equivalent to give you in return, if you child is any equivalent. you will find sooner or later that there is no other earthly party in this world to deal with than ourselves if you want to recover your child. Mr. Ros why could not your relative give any name so that we could have a name to address him? it matters not what the name is we shall regard him as yourself in every sense of the word so look to whom you appoint to transact this business for you. we tell you positivey and absoluty that on his acts right or rong square or crooked in dealing with us the life or death of yu child shall hang now. Mr. Ros you may appoint any one you please to transact the bisines with us but we want you to bear in mind that his acts are your acts and it shall be consumated just as you will it—and if you want your child safe and sound this is the final day of salvation. we have been at least under $15 a day expense since we had him but that is our own affair. you may have been under five times that expense for what we know. Mr Ross you must not be deceived from this because we are under expenses from keeping him that we will turn him loose should you not meet our demands. we tell you positively we could not do it we would not do it should it benefit us the whole amount of $20,000 than for the redemption of your child. you may think from this should you pay the demands. we might not then return your child. Mr Ros when you have paid our demands in good faith you have answered all we can ask of you and we tell you as we have told you before that your child is not worth one cent to us after that ony to return him to you and we would not fail in any event to return him to you for $10,000. strange as this may appear to you yet it is our interest to do so. should you not come to our terms it is our interest that you never get him and you may rely on it you never will alive. you may think this is to cruel for any sivelized person to perpetrate but we tell you positively it is the lot of one of us to perform it if it comes to this crises. you will not be able by any quibbling to stay the hand of fate much longer from him. we have kept him over one hundred days longer than we expected. now it is for you alone to say whether he shal live or die. this is the last letter we shall we ever send you till we send you the final one revealing to you whether he is either alive or dead just as you will it to be.

you need not ask more questions for they will not be noticed no answer will be returned. if you appoint any one to conduct this business for you let him come to New York make it known through personal with any address he choses. this address will do (John Johnathan is stopping at so and so. Johnathan or who he may be must not leave the hotel till he hears from us. if you mean square bisiness have your personal in Friday's *Herald* (N. Y.) and be in New York on Saturday morning. Mr. Ros bear in mind this is the last and final letter you ever receive from us unless you come to New York to close this bisiness.

The abductors again intimate that we are keeping up this correspondence for the purpose of tracing them, and warn us that the money being used in looking for them is spent foolishly. They profess to know what the detectives are doing, and state that they cannot aid me; they themselves, and they alone, can give me an equivalent for the money by returning the child. Whoever may act as my agent in transacting this business will be regarded as myself, and on his action the life of the child will depend. They say they have been at an expense of fifteen dollars per day since CHARLEY was taken, and have kept him one hundred days longer than they expected; that after the money is received the child will not be worth one cent to them, having answered all the ends for which he was taken; but add that should the money not be paid, I will never get him alive, but will be informed of his death. They declare that this is the last letter they will send, unless they write to reveal the fact of his death; that it has fallen to the lot of one of them to kill him if he is not redeemed; and give the address for the next personal to be put in the *Herald* of November 6th. This appeared in the paper on that date, and is as follows:

John, you must change the name of John for personals. It has become too well known.

On the 7th of November the following reply was received, dated Philadelphia:

[No. 23.]

PHILA., Nov. 6.—*Mr. Ros:* we told you in the last positively we would not write you any more. this dozing about puts us to no small amount of trouble we had left phila for New York thinking you were ready to close up the business. we told you positively procrastination is dangerous. had we accomplished what we have been fishing for the last three months your child would now have been dead but we have not yet caught the fish we wanted. yours is but a small item compared with something else. Walter said you owned the two new houses right opposite you or we should never troubled you. Mr. Ros you have asked to keep this negotiation a secret between ourselves it is a wise policy in your doings not that we fear being traped in our own game. This is positively the last from us. if you are sincere you would be anxious to settle this business if you regard the life of your child. we mean to fulfil every promise we made you in good faith. the result depends entirely with yourself whom you appoint to transact this business for yu we want at least two days notice before you come to New York for we may be 500 miles off and we ask for time to get there yu can say tuesday nov 10. Saul of Tarsus. (choose your own name say i will be stoping so and so all day. do not leave the hotel wherever you may be stoping for one minute during the day). this thing must come and shall come to a close in a few days.

In this, the last letter received from the abductors, they hint that they have been trying for three months to steal another child, and had they succeeded my child would have been killed, and a ransom demanded for their new victim, compared with which the twenty thousand required from me would be an insignificant sum. They also state that Walter misled them regarding my circumstances by telling them I owned two new houses which had been built opposite to my residence. Tuesday, November 10th, is fixed as the day on which my representative is asked to be in New York to pay over the money, and the address of the personal is changed to "Saul of Tarsus."

More than four months had now passed since CHARLEY had been stolen. The police and detective agencies, with all their unremitted and almost superhuman efforts, had failed to find the thieves, or get a clue to the place where they had hidden their victim. Twenty-three letters written and mailed in different places had been received from the abductors, bidding defiance to the best detective skill. Contrary to our expectation and hope, the abductors had not made a single error, or the smallest slip, by which they could be traced; but with a shrewdness and cunning far above ordinary criminals, they had successfully evaded pursuit, and baffled every effort at discovery.

Four months were these of acute suffering to my family and friends; and now I was so ill that for a time my life was despaired of, and it was thought by my medical attendants that nothing but the speedy return of CHARLEY could restore my broken mind and body—that the load of trouble which was crushing me must be removed in order to a mental and physical restoration. The want of success in the past led to little hope of recovery of CHARLEY by the same appliances in the immediate present. Besides, Mrs. Ross was weighed down with the accumulation of trouble; and thus, in the double hope of saving my life and recovering CHARLEY, she consented to have the child restored by paying the ransom. This her brothers determined to do in the way pointed out by the abductors, paying them the money and taking the risk of getting the child afterwards. As the authorities both here and in New York knew of the change of address of the personals from "John" to "Saul of Tarsus," they were informed that it

was the purpose of Mrs. Ross's brothers to redeem the child by paying the ransom which the abductors demanded, and on the 13th of November, Superintendent Walling wrote as follows to Captain Heins:

DEAR SIR.—Please see Mr. Lewis and say to him that I think it dangerous for parties to meet relative to any negotiations for the child, with a large amouut of money, unless they have some officers within call, as the parties might be disguised, and in case the villains were to fail in making terms, they might take desperate chances to obtain the money.

GEO. W. WALLING, *Superintendent.*

Notwithstanding the caution of the Superintendent, the family proposed in good faith to deliver the money at the appointed place. In order to notify the abductors of this purpose, the following personal was published in the New York *Herald* of November 15th:

Saul of Tarsus. Fifth Avenue Hotel, Wednesday, the 18th inst. All day.

F. W. LINCOLN

On the 17th of November, my wife's brother and her nephew took rooms at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, registering the name F. W. Lincoln, to correspond with the personal, remaining continuously in their room from the time of their arrival until the evening of the following day. They had with them a satchel containing $20,000 in United States notes of denominations of from ones to tens as required, and were kept in nervous anxiety the entire day. No one called for the money, and on the 19th, the following day, they published in the same paper a personal as follows:

Saul of Tarsus. We have performed our part to the letter, you have broken faith; we will have no more trifling; action must now be simultaneous.

No answer was ever received to either of the last two personals. Thus was ended a correspondence charac-

terized by a heartlessness and brutality unsurpassed in the annals of crime. Heart-rending as was the abduction in itself, the letters immeasurably increased the torture. It is impossible to conceive of anything more cruel than the continual threats to annihilate the child should the demands of the kidnappers not be fully complied with.

These terrible letters, full of everything calculated to stir a parent's soul to the lowest depths, were in such accord with the cold-blooded scheme, that for five long months a constant dread possessed us that the threats they contained would be literally executed; and though our hearts yearned to hear something of our suffering stolen one, yet each letter was opened with fear and trembling. It might announce our CHARLEY'S death by murderous hands, and notify us of the place where his lifeless remains were deposited, or tell us how he was pining away in sickness and darkness—away from his home and those who loved him—away from the sympathy and tender care of his mother—with none near him but such wrètches as those who stole him, whose hearts were too hard to relent at his cries, or to be moved by his sufferings. None but ourselves can ever know how bitter the draught in the chalice. Truthfully did these villians say in one of their letters, "You may think this is too cruel for civilized persons to perpetrate; but we tell you positively it is the lot of one of us to perform it." Monstrous indeed is it, that men should be so devoid of all human feelings as to avow that they even contemplated sacrificing the life of a little child for the sake of money, and in advance to notify the parents of their purpose. Yet it is so—to realize it is nigh impossible.

The failure of the abductors to come to the hotel on the 18th of November for the ransom money, caused our friends to determine not to hand over the money unless CHARLEY was given up at the same time; hence in the last personal it is positively said that the exchange must now be simultaneous. The kidnappers evidently were afraid to show themselves, notwithstanding the boldness they assumed and the security they professed; and when the time to fill an appointment arrived they failed to carry out their plans. The search for them was continued with unabated activity. Their usual haunts were watched, and a constant eye kept on the various saloons along the river-front and elsewhere. A detective obtained a situation in a restaurant as an attendant where it was said they occasionally took their meals. Officers were placed in a house opposite the premises of a notorious receiver of stolen goods, where they usually disposed of their plunder. On several occasions detectives were close on the tracks of the criminals, and at one time they entered a suspected saloon to find that the men had left there about an hour before. All knowledge of their whereabouts was denied by those who ought to have known, and who actually did know. Notwithstanding all these difficulties, they were hunted for as by bloodhounds after their prey. They felt that they were not safe anywhere—the letters posted in so many different places indicate that they were indeed fugitives—and so hard were they pressed by the officers that they were forced to remain almost wholly on the water, visiting New York at rare intervals, and then only in the night in the most secret way. Soon they were brought to distress and suffering for both

food and clothing, and under these circumstances resorted to burglary to supply their most pressing necessities.

On the eastern side of the upper bay of New York, the Long Island shore rises into an uneven and beautifully wooded bluff known as Bay Ridge. Along its slopes and summits are a large number of villas and cottages, mostly summer residences of wealthy citizens of New York. It is regarded as one of the most delightful places in the neighborhood of the metropolis. On one of the highlands that curve the water's edge —about a mile distant from the shore—are two handsome dwellings, one of which is occupied permanently by I. Holmes Van Brunt, the other as a summer residence by his brother, Judge Van Brunt, of the Supreme Court of New York. The houses are separated by a narrow lawn. Before closing the house for the season the Judge furnished it with a burglar-alarm telegraph, which conveys information of the slightest interference with any of its doors or windows into the bed-room of his brother in the adjoining house. On the morning of December 14th, at two o'clock, this alarm-bell rang violently. Mr. Van Brunt was at once awakened, and immediately called his son Albert, who was asleep. When Albert came down stairs the father said, "Go over and see what has sounded that alarm; I think the wind has blown open one of those blinds again," an occurrence which had more than once before caused the bell to ring. The young man went, first taking the precaution to put a pistol in his pocket. Approaching his uncle's house he noticed a flickering light through the blinds of one of the windows; he returned and told his

father about the light, procured a lantern for himself, and went to arouse William Scott, the Judge's gardener, who lived in a cottage close by, and who had the keys of the Judge's house. On their way back, Scott and Albert ascertained that more than one man was in the house with the light. They then awoke Herman Frank, the hired man, and after placing one man in front and another behind the Judge's house, Albert returned to his father and reported what he had seen and done. His father, although seriously suffering from illness, after getting together the arms in the house, joined his son, and calling the gardener and hired man to him, said, "Now boys, we have work to do, and must understand each other; we must capture those fellows if we can without killing them, but if they resist we will have to defend ourselves. Albert, you and Scott stand before the front door, Frank and I will take the rear, and whatever happens afterward, let us remain in the positions we first take up; because if we move around we will be certain in the dark to shoot one another instead of the thieves. Whichever way they come, let the two who meet them take care of them as best they can; if they come out and scatter both ways, then we will all have a chance to work." The party took their respective places; the night was pitch dark, cold and wet. The watchers waited patiently for nearly an hour, while the burglars went through every room in the house, with the rays from their dark lanterns flashing now and then through the chinks in the shutters. At length they came down to the basement floor and into the pantry. Through the window of this little apartment Mr. Van Brunt could see distinctly the faces of the two burglars. He could have

shot them down there and then in perfect safety to himself and his companions, but he wished to refrain from taking life until he could be certain that the robbers would show resistance. He did not wish to kill them in the house, nor in any other way than in self-defense.

The elder Van Brunt, finding he was growing numb and weak from the effects of the cold, damp air of the inclement night, determined "to push things," and standing in front of the back door, ordered the hired man to open it quickly. In trying to get the key into the keyhole he made a noise which the quick-eared burglars heard. Their light went out immediately, and their footsteps were heard ascending the cellar stairs. Mr. Van Brunt and his man moved towards the trap-door of the cellar, the lock of which had been broken. This was soon opened, and the body of a man started up, followed by the head of another. Mr. Van Brunt cried out "Halt," in response to which two pistol shots from the cellar door flashed almost in his face, but without injuring him. He then fired his shot-gun at the foremost man, and a cry of agony followed. The other man fired at him a second time, and then ran towards the front of the house. There he dashed almost into the arms of the younger Van Brunt, at whom he fired two more shots, luckily missing him also, and before the pistol could be fired again his arm was struck down by a blow from Mr. Van Brunt's shot-gun, which was shattered. Uttering a terrible oath the burglar now retreated, but before he had gone many rods Mr. Van Brunt sent a bullet into the would-be murderer's back. The desperate house-breaker staggered for an instant, and then fell dead.

Meanwhile the other burglar, although mortally wounded from the elder Van Brunt's first fire, continued to shoot in the dark until he was exhausted. The firing now ceased, the only thing positively known, after the second or third shot, being the gratifying fact that while none of the defenders of the Judge's property were hurt, the two burglars were literally riddled with shot and bullets. One was stone dead, with his empty revolver under his head; the other lived until five o'clock—only about two hours. Several neighbors, aroused by the firing, came rushing to the place, and got there by the time the fight was over; one of whom was asked by the wounded man to give him some whisky. After tasting it, he pushed it away, and called for water, which he drank eagerly. He was then asked who they were, and where they came from? He replied, "Men, I wont lie to you; my name is Joseph Douglas, and that man over there is William Mosher." He spelled M-o-s-h-e-r-'s name, adding, "Mosher lives in the city (New York), and I have no home. I am a single man, and have no relatives except a brother and sister, whom I have not seen for twelve or fifteen years. Mosher is a married man, and has five children." Believing himself to be mortally wounded, he continued: "I have $40 in my pocket; I wish to be buried with it; I made it honestly." Then he said, "*It's no use lying now: Mosher and I stole* CHARLEY ROSS *from Germantown.*" When asked why they stole him, he replied, "To make money." He was then asked who had charge of the child; to which he replied, "Mosher knows all about the child; ask him." He was then told that Mosher was dead, and was raised up so that

he could see the dead body of his partner in guilt. He exclaimed, "God help his poor wife and family." To the question, "could he tell where the child was;" he answered, "God knows I tell you the truth; I don't know where he is; Mosher knew." The same question was repeated a number of times to him; but he gave no further information, but said, "Superintendent Walling knows all about us, and was after us, and now he shall have us. Send him word. The child will be returned home safe and sound in a few days." He told his inquirers that they had come over in a sloop which was lying in the cove, and begged them not to question him any more, and not to move him, as it hurt him to talk or to move. He remained conscious until about fifteen minutes before his death. Thus writhing in agony, lying on the spot where he had fallen, drenched with the descending rain, ended the purposeless and miserable life of one who aided in rending the heart-strings of a family unknown to him, and in outraging the feelings of the civilized world. So swiftly did retribution come upon his companion, that not one word escaped his lips: no message to his family—no confession of his terrible crimes—no prayer was he permitted to utter: suddenly, as by the stroke of lightning, was his soul ushered into eternity. Surely "the way of the transgressor is hard."

On the morning of the 14th December, Supt. Walling received a telegram from Justice Church, of Bay Ridge, stating that two men, Mosher and Douglas, had been shot and killed in attempting a burglary, and one of them had confessed that they were the abductors of CHARLEY ROSS, and that the Superintendent was

searching for them. Supt. Walling telegraphed at once in reply that they were the very men he was searching for, and he would send a detective to identify them.

Detective Silleck was at once dispatched to Bay Ridge, and as soon as he saw the dead bodies of Mosher and Douglas, he said, pointing to the one, and then to the other, "*That* is Joe Douglas, and *that* is Bill Mosher. Take the glove off his left hand, and you'll find a withered finger." Detective Sellick knew that in his early life Mosher had lost the dividing cartilage of the nose from disease, and his appearance and speech from that cause was peculiar. He also knew that from a felon the first finger on Mosher's left hand had withered away to a point, and the nail on the finger had grown to the shape of a parrot's beak. To conceal this defect, he usually wore gloves. On receipt of the dispatch from Bay Ridge, Supt. Walling telegraphed to Capt. Heins the intelligence of the death of Mosher and Douglas, with the confession of the latter, and requested him to come to New York. The Captain, as soon as he received the telegram, said that if the men had not told where the child was concealed, there would be greater difficulty in finding him now than there would have been had they lived; for while *they* lived, there was a prospect of arresting them, and through them of recovering the child. Mr. McKean with Captain Heins left Philadelphia by the next train, first arranging with my nephew to telegraph him to take my son Walter and the gardener, who had seen the men driving on the lane, to New York, for the purpose of identification in case the bodies were not disfigured, and could be recognized. In accordance with

this arrangement, the following telegram was sent, dated New York, December 14, 1874:

FRANK D. LEWIS.—Superintendent says the bodies are not disfigured. Bring Walter over. Have hope of finding where the child is to-night. Tell the chief, and keep quiet. WM. R. HEINS, *Capt. Detectives.*

On the following morning, December 15th, Walter, with his uncle Joseph W. Lewis and Peter Callahan, the gardener, went to New York in response to the telegram received from Captain Heins. Walter had not heard of the tragedy, and did not know for what object he was taken to New York. While there no one was allowed to converse with him on the subject. The reason for this was, that he might see the dead bodies of Mosher and Douglas before any one could speak to him about what had taken place on the previous day at Bay Ridge, so that when taken to the Morgue in Brooklyn, to which the bodies had been removed, he was in perfect ignorance of the purpose of his visit, or of the catastrophe that had necessitated it. The bodies had been stowed away in a vault the night before. When they were brought out the child Walter was startled at first, and seemed greatly agitated; soon he recovered himself, and the recognition, as described by an eye-witness, is as follows: "When the bodies were shown to little Walter he was left to himself, no one asking any questions. His recognition of Mosher, the older of the two burglars, was slow and gradual, his memory reviving by degrees; but the instant he saw the body of the younger man he said, 'Oh, that's awful like him; he's the driver'—meaning the driver of the buggy. These exclamations came quick, spontaneous, and with an earnestness that was as convincing as they were

impressive. Subsequently he said, 'He,' pointing to Douglas *alias* Clark, 'was the one that gave me the money to buy the fire crackers.' Again he said, 'He was the one that gave me the candy, and the other one,' pointing to Mosher, 'he sometimes had candy too.' Peter Callahan was equally positive about Douglas (alias Clark) as the driver of the buggy, and expressed a strong belief as to Mosher. He said, 'I am certain, from his general appearance, that he was one of the men, but whenever I attempted to look at him he put up to his face a handkerchief which partly hid it. I suppose he did so to hide the deformity of his nose. I recognize the body fully.' The identification of the bodies as those of the two men who had been seen on Washington Lane, Germantown, and who had driven the children away, fully satisfied those who were acquainted with the suspicions so long entertained, that William Mosher and Joseph Douglas were the real abductors of my son, CHARLEY ROSS.

Very early on Monday morning the intelligence of the tragic death of the burglars, and the dying confession of one of them, became known in the city of New York, and, through the Associated Press, was telegraphed throughout the length and breadth of the land. It was the chief topic of conversation. So much had been said and written about the abduction during the past five months, and so few persons knew that the men who were killed at Bay Ridge had been for a long time suspected of the crime, and were then even being hunted by the police, that when it was published that one of them had in his dying moments confessed that he and his companion had stolen CHARLEY ROSS, an

intensified interest was everywhere manifested. There was added to the crime a fresh and awful element of tragedy. The sudden death by violence of the two villains struck the community as a just and startling act of retribution from God.

When merited punishment overtakes deep guilt, the public sense of justice is satisfied; but when the punishment is astonishing and unexpected, and the sudden retribution which falls on one offense in the very act of its commission, and which might seem greater than its wickedness deserves, reveals another and darker crime, which shows that the criminals had sinned up to the full measure of the fearful penalty, reverent minds cannot fail to recognize in so wonderful a coincidence the directing hand of Providence; and even the most thoughtless will be awakened to some dim sense of a moral Governor presiding over human affairs. The crime of stealing a little child, and holding his life subject to the payment of a large sum of money, was of so revolting a nature that the whole community felt it to be an offense against society; and wherever the sudden and violent death of the kidnappers was announced, the universal feeling seemed to be that God would not permit such a crime to stand unpunished, or such criminals to exist. Certainly the event must be classed among the romances of crime; for here were two men, hunted through many months, tracked hither and thither by tireless officers, yet escaping the consequences of their great crime only to be shot dead for a far less heinous offense, and one in no way connected with the kidnapping. The killing of two burglars at the same time is itself a rare and extraordinary event, well worthy of comment, even had the victims not been the long-sought kidnap-

pers. Besides, in the contest in which they were engaged, although the burglars made every effort to defend themselves by maiming or killing their opponents, and fired many shots, yet they injured not one of their assailants, not even slightly. Then the revelation extorted by approaching death from the younger of the two burglars is one of the noteworthy incidents in the history of crime. The pages of fiction present nothing more remarkable than that voluntary confession and its surroundings. The thick darkness of the last hours of a stormy December night enveloped the dying thief, as he lay on the wet ground stricken with his death-wound. A dim lantern, serving only to render the surrounding darkness barely visible, revealed one or two persons standing over the fatally-wounded man. His first thought was the alleviation of his physical suffering—he begged for whisky, which was brought; but finding himself unable to swallow it, he then asked for water, which he drank without relief to his excruciating sufferings. Then came upon him a sense that his worthless and miserable life was fast ebbing away, and the pangs of conscience for a few brief moments became even stronger than the torture of his wounds, and forced him to unburden his mind of a guilty secret: "It's no use lying now," said he, "I helped to steal CHARLEY ROSS." The terror of death, and fear of the just retribution which lies beyond this world, unlocked his guilty tongue. This sudden awakening of a dormant conscience in view of the near approach of death, affords strong evidence of the existence of that moral sense which our religion teaches us to believe will survive even the blackest career of crime.

Tortured by his suddenly awakened conscience, this hardened miscreant felt impelled to unburden his mind by a confession which is one of the striking features of this singular tragedy. His was the bad end of a bad man—the terrible ending of a hard and bitter life.

But while the universal sentiment at first was that these vile, bad men had met their deserts, yet, on second thought, a feeling of disappointment followed, that they had not been captured instead of being killed, and forced to reveal their guilty secret. The greater criminal who devised the plot—the author of the cruel letters, and who probably was the only one of the pair who knew where the child was secreted—died instantly, without a word—the word for which we had toiled for months. Efforts were at once made to find a trace of the hiding-place of the child. Nothing was found on the persons of the dead burglars that indicated who they were, or gave any light on the subject of the abduction. They had with them a complete set of burglar's tools, and each one had a revolving pistol and a large knife. The boat on which the burglars came to Bay Ridge was thoroughly searched: there were found on it a few copies of the New York *Herald* and a copy of the New York *Evening Telegram*, in which was a burlesque account of the finding of CHARLEY ROSS; nothing, however, was discovered to give the least clue upon which to work. The boat, it was subsequently ascertained, had been stolen on the night of the 27th of September, at Bridgeport, Connecticut: when taken it was a cat-rigged sail-boat, but had been altered by Mosher into a sloop before the tragedy on Bay Ridge.

It was supposed that Mosher and Douglas had per-

haps two accomplices, and the policy now adopted was to discover them by hunting up all their associates. Mosher's wife and her brother, Westervelt, were the means through whom this information was sought. Hours were spent by Superintendent Walling and Mr. McKean in questioning them, for they were unwilling witnesses. Mrs. Mosher said that her husband had told her that the child had been placed with an old man and woman, and was well cared for, but she did not know who his keepers were, or where they lived. Superintendent Walling received a letter about this time, stating that an old man and woman were living alone on an island in Long Island Sound, whose conduct was very suspicious, as they would not permit any one to come on the island. This information was thought to be so important that, although it was night, an officer was dispatched to watch the shore, and prevent any person from going to the island, or from coming off to the mainland. Early the following morning several persons, with two or three officers, after considerable risk of shipwreck amidst the ice, landed on the island. It was thoroughly examined, but they found no evidences of there ever having been a child kept there. The old people, although they had heard of the abduction, had not heard of the killing of the abductors, and stated that they had been much annoyed by roving marauders who came to steal poultry, and that they were suspicious of visitors. An old woman was heard of in Connecticut, whose mysterious movements were suspicious. She was a friend of Mosher, had loaned him money to begin business at one time, and was said to be the very kind of person with whom the child might be placed.

She occasionally went to Brooklyn and New York, but moved about as if she was afraid of something; and besides she had several children living with her, one about the age of CHARLEY ROSS, and this boy had disappeared. Here was a case which looked very much as if it would furnish a solution to the secret. The old woman's home was visited; stubborn and belligerent, she protested she knew nothing about anything, and would not tell if she did: said, "I knew that Mosher was not strictly honest, but that was nobody's affair, if I chose to aid him in earning his living decently." Hours were spent in plying her with questions, and finally all her mystery was accounted for. She owned some tumble-down tenement houses in Brooklyn, and was in constant dread lest officials should come to collect taxes, or compel her to put them in habitable condition. The little boy which had been with her was the child of her niece, and was dead. During his sickness he had been attended by the Mayor of the city, who was a physician; his photograph was shown to the officers, and they were satisfied that she never had our little boy. When the old woman really understood the object of the visit, she was enthusiastic in her desire to serve the Ross family, and offered to return to New York with the officers, and do what she could to find the child. Thus again were hours spent on a trail which appeared to have something real in it, but which when investigated proved valueless.

About this time a statement was made public, that the body of a boy was found in Newark Bay on the 19th of November, and after keeping the remains four days, and no one appearing to claim the body, they

buried it. The child was said to be about four years old, light complexioned, light silky hair cut close, blue eyes. I received several letters, stating that he answered the published description of my son, and that it was believed he had fallen from a boat and was drowned. Although we very much doubted if he was CHARLEY, because all agreed that the child which was found had blue eyes, while ours has brown or hazel eyes; yet, to be certain, his body was exhumed and examined. The physician present wrote to us that the child could not have been more than about 20 months old. He had but few teeth, had blue eyes, which conclusively confirmed us in our judgment that the child was not CHARLEY.

In the different interviews which Superintendent Walling and Mr. McKean had with Westervelt, many points of interest connected with the case were, by searching questions, dragged out of him. This will be more particularly noticed at another time. Among other things, he stated that he had slept at a hotel in the same room with Douglas, Saturday night, December 12th, the night before the killing, and Douglas then told him that the child was living, and Mosher, despairing of getting the ransom by the plans proposed, was considering a change in them, and had partly worked out another plan for re-opening the negotiations on the basis of a simultaneous exchange. Circumstantial evidence was thus obtained, confirming the dying statement of Douglas, that the child was living at the time of the death of the men. This information, obtained by Mr. McKean, so contrary to the popular belief on the subject—although those familiar with the whole case

never had any reason to suppose that the child had died or been destroyed—was an additional incentive to hasten the efforts to discover the person who had possession of the child. Through Westervelt, two of Mosher's associates were heard of, who lived in Baltimore. Officer Wood, of Philadelphia, was forthwith sent to that city to look them up. They were found living in miserable quarters in the midst of squalor and wretchedness, and brought to Philadelphia, where they were closely examined. This episode was almost laughable. These fellows, who had been thieves and receivers of stolen goods, were great cowards, especially fearing "vigilance committees." They had no sooner got to Philadelphia, where they arrived before daylight, than they were taken to a tavern where some drunken brawlers were fighting. Taken from this place quite nervous, they were put into a room at the police station, where muskets and ropes are kept. This was too much for them. They felt sure of being lynched, and one of them, getting down on his knees, begged piteously to be let off. Throughout their examination, they evinced great terror; and afterwards, some victuals being given them, they declared the food had been poisoned, complained of illness, and refused to eat. These fellows told what they knew, which was not much, and then were sent back to Baltimore. Evidently they were not the kind of people to whom Mosher would confide a secret of such vital importance as the abduction of a child and his place of concealment.

Those engaged in the search had become accustomed to disappointments and delays; but instead of being discouraged, began again with renewed zeal after each

and every disappointment. Everything in the nature of a clue was followed up as quickly as the railroad and telegraph would enable the searchers to do the work, by night and by day, without any cessation. There was a hope, after the abductors were killed, that their accomplices would set the child free; and instructions were given to the whole police force of New York, to be on the lookout for a stray child, and if such should be found in any respects answering the description of CHARLEY ROSS, to send him immediately to Police Headquarters.

Considerable excitement was occasioned at the Central Office one afternoon by the report that CHARLEY ROSS, the long-lost child, had been found by a policeman on the Bowery, and had been placed in charge of the Superintendent. At first sight, before questioning the boy, the Superintendent thought he certainly had the right child. He was about five years of age, had long, curly, flaxen hair, dark hazel eyes, and the features bore a striking resemblance to the pictures of CHARLEY. The suspicion was strengthened by the child, who, when asked his name, said it was Charley. On being further questioned he gave his father's name and residence, and was recognized by an officer as a child, who had been brought to a station-house once before on the supposition that he was CHARLEY ROSS. The authorities not being able to get a real clue to the custodian of the child, and the abductors being dead, were compelled to examine into everything which was brought to their notice, however improbable, with the hope that something would be found out which would reveal the hiding-place of the child. This imposed on them an

immense amount of labor, which was cheerfully performed; and, although disappointed so often, yet whenever anything fresh was started they readily undertook to investigate it with ardor and zeal in the face of innumerable failures. This persistent search was continued from the time of the killing of the abductors until the 20th of December without any favorable results, and the mystery still remained as inexplicable as it had ever been.

At this point Mrs. Ross's brothers, seeing that there was scarcely a probability of finding the child by the means which had been employed, determined to make an effort to end the matter by offering a reward for CHARLEY, promising to ask no questions of the person who should return him, or who should give information which would lead thereto. This advertisement appeared December 23d, 1874, in the papers of all the principal cities, over, my name, and is as follows:

$5,000 REWARD

Five thousand dollars reward will be paid for the return,

WITHIN TEN DAYS,

From this date, to any one of the addresses named below, of my son,

CHARLES BREWSTER ROSS,

Aged four years and seven months, who was taken from Germantown, July 1st, 1874.

Being entirely satisfied that his abductors were killed at Bay Ridge, L. I., on the 14th inst., I now offer the above sum for his return, or for information which shall lead thereto, promising to ask no questions.

The boy may be delivered to any one of the following addresses:

ROSS, SHOTT & Co., No. 304 Market St., Philadelphia.
HENRY LEWIS, No. 2101 Walnut St., Philadelphia.
LEWIS BROTHERS & Co., No. 74 Leonard St., New York.
LEWIS BROTHERS & Co., No. 63 Franklin St., Boston.

A. B. STOUGHTON, opposite Patent Office, Seventh St., Washington, D. C.

HOLLIDAY, PHILLIPS & CO., No. 21 Hanover St., Baltimore, Md.

Or to my residence, where information may also be sent.

CHRISTIAN K. ROSS,

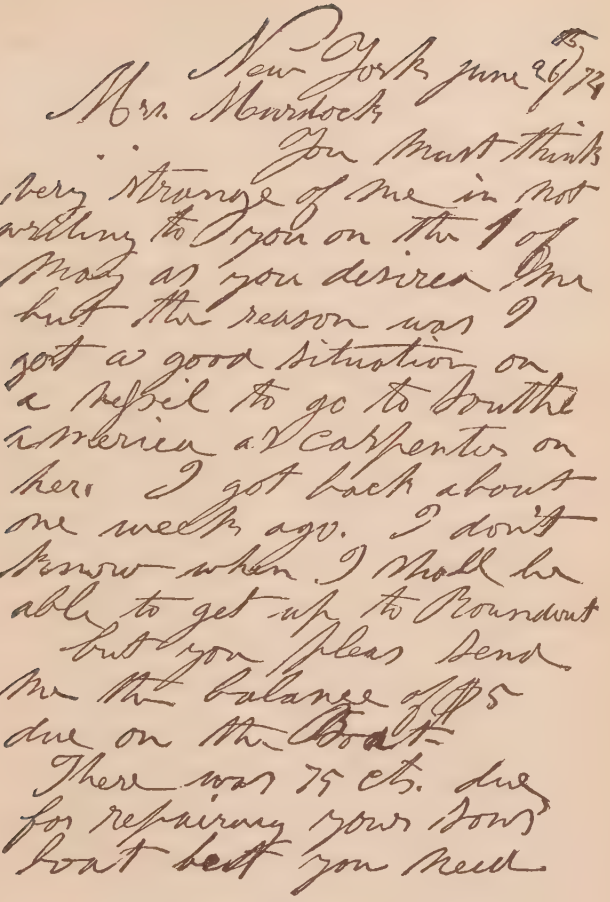
East Washington Lane, Germantown, via Chestnut Hill Railroad.

Philadelphia, December 23d, 1874.

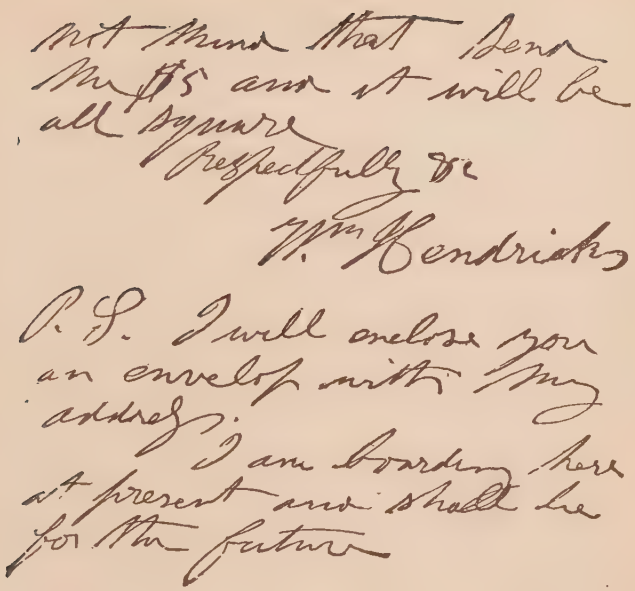
It has already been stated that efforts were made to procure some of Mosher's writing, to compare it with the letters which I had received from the abductors, but without success, excepting the signature of William Henderson to receipts—that being one of his assumed names. Westervelt had declared that he did not know where to get any; yet when closely questioned after the death of the men, he told Mr. McKean that on the 25th of June he was in Philadelphia, and Mosher had written a letter addressed to a Mrs. Murdock, who attended the lighthouse at Rondout; that he carried that letter to New York, and mailed it there on the 26th of June, it being dated one day in advance of the writing, so as to correspond with the date of mailing; and he thought if some person was sent to see Mrs. Murdock, the letter could be obtained from her. Superindendent Walling on the 24th of December sent an officer with Westervelt to Rondout, and they got the letter, a *fac simile* of which is here given. It is signed Wm. Hendricks—another of the names which Mosher assumed. Although written in Philadelphia, as Westervelt stated, it is dated New York, as follows:

NEW YORK, *June 26, 1874.*

MRS. MURDOCK.—You must think very strange of me in not writing to you on the 1st of May, as you desired me. The reason was that I got a good situation on a vessel to go to South America as carpenter on her. I got back about one week ago. I don't know when I shall be able to


New York June 26/74
Mrs. Murdock
You must think very Strange of me in not writing to you on the 1st of May as you desired me but the reason was I got a good situation on a Vessel to go to South America as Carpenter on her. I got back about one week ago. I don't know when I shall be able to get up to Rondout but you please send me the balance of $5 due on the Boat
There was 75 cts. due for repairing your Sons boat but you need

FAC-SIMILE OF THE RONDOUT LIGHTHOUSE LETTER.


Mr Thos Hart Send
Me $5 and it will be
all square
Respectfully &c
Wm Hendricks
P. S. I will enclose you
an envelop with my
address.
I am boarding here
at present and shall be
for the future

Fac-Simile of the Rondout Lighthouse Letter.

get up to Rondout; but you please send me the balance of five due on the boat. There was 85 cents due for repairing your row boat but you need not mind that. Send me $5 and it will be all square.

Respectfully, etc., WM. HENDRICKS.

P. S.—I will inclose you an envelope with my address. I am boarding here at present and shall be for the future.

Both envelopes were also obtained: the address on the envelope which Mrs. Murdock was requested to use when she would answer his letter, is that of the house in which Westervelt lived at that time. This letter, written in his usual handwriting, has been carefully compared by experts with the disguised letters which I received, and they have decided that all of them were written by the same person.

At the time of the killing of the abductors, I had not fully recovered from my illness, and for the purpose of restoring my health had been for several weeks in my native place, Middletown, Pennsylvania, where my wife, with Walter, had come to see me. At noon on the 14th of December, as they were about to return home, he following telegram was received, addressed to my brother-in-law:

PHILADELPHIA, *December 14, 1874.*

Tell C. K. R. quietly that Mosher and Douglas were killed last night, while committing a burglary, near New York. Douglas confessed that they stole CHARLEY. JOSEPH ROSS.

Our hopes were now raised to the highest pitch, in the anticipation that soon our dear little boy would be restored to us, and that our anxieties would shortly be ended. We had so long been subject to alternations of fear and hope, that our weary hearts were only too ready to catch at this intelligence as the first real gleam of light that broke through the impenetrable darkness.

Joy and happiness again resumed their wonted place on Mrs. Ross's countenance as she left me, with the promise that as soon as our dear CHARLEY was found, she would telegraph the glad news; and sick or well, we would (should he return before the coming holidays) unite in spending Christmas day with *all* our loved ones to surround our happy family board.

Days passed away, yet no intelligence came; truly "hope deferred maketh the heart sick." Months have gone, and still nothing has been heard of our little boy. Years have passed, and there has been no solution of the dread problem. Yet are we hopeful, believing that Providence, who so strangely suffered the abductors to be taken away without a sign, will further vindicate His righteous government, and not permit us always to remain in ignorance of what has become of our dear little CHARLEY.

CHAPTER X.

LOST CHILDREN RESTORED TO THEIR PARENTS.

"NOTHING has been more talked of and written about in this country for months past than the abduction of CHARLEY ROSS, a little boy of Philadelphia;" so says an English paper of January, 1875.

For several months before the killing of the burglars at Bay Ridge, the public had settled down in the belief that the child was dead; but when it became known that one of the villains had confessed that he himself aided in the abduction, and in his dying moments declared that the child would be restored to his home within a few days, the case was invested anew with a vivid and startling interest. Intense excitement again prevailed in this city, and every report was seized upon by the public with avidity. And not in the cities alone, but throughout the country, people were moved to make the closest and most vigilant search. Evidence of this was afforded us in numbers of letters which began again to pour in, describing children who were thought to bear a resemblance to the pictures of CHARLEY, so widely circulated. Many singular facts have been brought to light in connection with the search in this case, and children have been found in nearly every section of the country, whose appearance often led to the belief that the missing one was found.

Some cases of exceptional interest deserve more than a passing notice, and will be given more particularly. One of these was that of a boy found in Chester, Illinois. The child was brought to that place by two villainous-looking men, one of whom claimed to be his father. The citizens, not believing the man's story, had him and the child placed in charge of the authorities of the town, who, upon questioning the child, believed him to have been stolen, and communicated by telegraph with the mayor of our city. Efforts were immediately made through the telegraph to find out if he was CHARLEY; but not being able to decide satisfactorily, my brother, James M. Ross, was sent to see the child. He found him sadly disfigured, his face shamefully marked with acid; his hair was dyed, his back was frightfully scarred, and his whole appearance indicated that he had been most cruelly abused. Although my brother was satisfied at first sight that he was not our little boy, yet the citizens, fearing he might not know him in his pitiable condition, prevailed on him to defer his decision until the next day, it being in the night when he arrived in the place. The following morning, after examining the child again, he decided that he was not CHARLEY. When separated from the man who had brought him to the town, the boy gave the following romantic story of his adventures: He said, two men, after taking him from a yard near his father's house, had put him in a room and locked him up until dark, when they conveyed him to the river bank, placed him in a boat, and rowed him to the other shore. There they left the boat, and made him walk a long distance through the woods. At times he became so weary

that he would fall to the ground; but they whipped him with switches to keep him awake. At length they reached a cabin in the forest, occupied by a woman. They did not tarry long in the hut, but started out on foot on a begging expedition, the boy doing most of the begging, being instructed what to say and how to act. His captors treated him brutally, and required him to obtain a dollar a day on pain of severe punishment. Some days he would get three or four dollars, and at other times he would get almost nothing. His natural shrewdness soon led him to deceive his tyrants; when he obtained more than a dollar he would give them the exact amount they had fixed as his task, and the balance he would hide away to use when he failed to get the required sum. In this way the two men and the woman and boy traveled through Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Arkansas, and other States, the boy begging money, and the men and woman living on it, and generally getting drunk every night. At length the woman died, and the men ceased their wanderings and stopped in Chester.

The boy at this time was about seven years old, and, although naturally bright and intelligent, had forgotten the name of the city from which he had been stolen, his own name, and in fact everything which related to his former life; said the man who claimed to be his father was not his father; but was unable to give any clue by which to ascertain where or to whom he belonged. The authorities of Chester refused to return the boy to the man in whose charge he had been found, and an application was made to the court by one of the citizens to prevent him from being taken away, and to have a

guardian appointed for him. After it was decided that the child was not our CHARLEY, a gentleman wrote to the chief of police of St. Louis, Missouri, an account of the little boy in Chester, who was supposed by those who had seen him to be CHARLEY ROSS, and also gave a description of the child, which letter was published in the papers of that city. A gentleman of St. Louis, Mr. Henry Lachmueller, read the account as published, and recognized some points in the description that led him to believe that the child might be his own son, who had mysteriously disappeared two and a half years before. Obtaining a fuller description, he proceeded to Chester to remove all doubt. What was his joy on seeing the child to find his hopes realized, and his long-lost son found at last. Although the child had forgotten everything relating to his family, yet as soon as he saw his father he recognized him. Mr. Lachmueller returned to St. Louis, and procured from the Governor of the State and a Judge in St. Louis satisfactory letters that he was a responsible person. In company with his wife he returned to Chester, and got possession of their child, whom they had long given up for lost—the authorities being satisfied that he had been stolen by the two vagabonds who had brought him to the place. Mr. Lachmueller gives the following account of the way in which the child was stolen. He was residing in St. Louis, engaged in the business of quarrying stone, and in July, 1872, he and his men were engaged at their work at a distance from his residence; his children carried the men's dinners to them every day. On the 3d of July several of the children proceeded from the house with baskets of provision for the quarrymen, and on

HENRY LACHMUELLER, FOUND IN ILLINOIS.

their way back stopped at a grocery, where they were acquainted. One of the boys, Henry, five years old, took off his shoes, and playfully ran back in the yard; as he did not return search was made for him, but he could not be found. While the parties were searching for him two bad-looking men informed them that it was useless for them to hunt for the boy, as they had seen him fall into the river and drown. Mr. Lachmueller, believing the statement of the men, caused the river to be dragged, in the hope of finding the body of his child. While thus engaged he learned from some persons in the vicinity that they had seen two men cross the river in a boat, with a little boy answering the description of Henry. Mr. Lachmueller, on being satisfied that the boy was stolen, declared he would make it the business of his life to find his child, and would do no more work until success crowned his efforts. During the time he was searching for his son, he heard of the abduction of my son, and being struck with the coincidence, persevered in the search, thinking he might find either CHARLEY or his own son. He spared no expense, but advertised in the newspapers of the United States, Canada, and Europe; and whenever he heard of a boy being found he proceeded at once to the place, only to be disappointed. He traveled through the Southern and Eastern States, and visited several European countries, but could hear no tidings of his son, until at last the report reached him of the child at Chester, Illinois, thought to be our little boy, and who really proved to be his own lost Henry

On the return to St. Louis of the father and mother with their son, great was the rejoicing of the friends and

neighbors. The children in the vicinity of their dwelling were wild with joy; hundreds crowded in and around the house, and persuaded the little returned hero to relate his story over and over again, until all knew it by heart. Thus the interest which was awakened in the search for our little boy resulted in the restoring of Mr. Lachmueller's child, who had been absent two and a half years, and had been trained to be a beggar, wandering over the country in company with vagabonds, who forced the child to obtain money that they might indulge in their lazy and vicious habits. A picture of little Henry Lachmueller, as he appeared when he was rescued by the citizens of Chester, Illinois, from the villains who had stolen him, is given to illustrate the manner in which his abductors disfigured him.

Another instance in which a child was restored to his proper guardian occurred in New York State. A letter was received by the Mayor of Philadelphia from a person residing in one of the counties of that State, bordering on the Hudson river, which, like many others, claimed positive knowledge of "the whereabouts of CHARLEY ROSS," and asked that some one who knew the child be sent to the place. Upon receipt of this letter the following dispatch was sent from this city:

Letter received. Please give me the grounds for your belief. Answer. W. S. STOKLEY, Mayor.

To this telegram no answer was received; but several days after the following telegram came to hand:

WM. S. STOKLEY, MAYOR, PHILADELPHIA.—A woman is here going to take him away. What must I do?

To which reply was made:

See a Justice of the Peace and your District Attorney. Be guided by their advice. Telegraph results. W. S. STOKLEY, *Mayor*.

In answer to this the following was received:

W. S. STOKLEY, MAYOR.—Send detective at once. Answer.

To this was replied:

An officer will leave for your city on the midnight train.

W. S. STOKLEY, *Mayor.*

Captain Heins then telegraphed to Superintendent Walling in New York:

A gentleman in ——— professes to have important information as to the whereabouts of CHARLEY ROSS. Has been in correspondence with the Mayor of this city. Send an officer there by the early train to-morrow morning. Let him say he has been sent by Mayor Stokley.

After the lapse of a few days the following letter was received from Superintendent Walling:

Your telegram was received. I sent an officer forthwith to ——— to examine the child supposed to be CHARLEY ROSS. He was a boy about seven years of age, and had been stolen from his father by the mother on October 20th, 1872, and placed in care of ——— until July 7th, 1873, when he was transferred to another person. The father hearing of the child has claimed him and taken him away. The boy, in consequence of a domestic difficulty or quarrel, had been secretly taken away from his father by his mother, and transferred to different persons, in different places, thus eluding every effort of the father to find him, until he heard that the child was supposed to be CHARLEY ROSS, when he went to the place and forthwith recovered his son.

As an indication of the vigilance of the people, even in the far distant states, the following instance is related:

During the early part of December, 1874, a strange woman appeared in Black River Falls, Wisconsin, with a child described as about four years old, and having light hair—said to be a perfect likeness of the photograph of CHARLEY ROSS, in possession of the sheriff of the county. The woman kept herself closely veiled, and gave her name as Lewis, which was found not to be

correct. She said she was going to visit her father, who was ill of typhoid fever, and, for fear the child might take the disease, desired to leave him until she returned. Her actions were, however, sufficiently strange to arouse suspicion among the people of the town. After leaving the child, she returned to the place where she had left him, but they did not recognize her, as she was disguised. The people then concluded the child must be the long-lost CHARLEY ROSS. The woman was traced to her father's house about twelve miles distant, but her parents were ignorant of the fact that she had brought a child to Black River Falls. She was arrested, but refused to say anything, except that the child did not belong to her. Communications were at once begun with me about the matter, and also with the Pinkerton agency in Chicago. A picture with a full description of the child was requested to be sent to me. In a short time the following letter enclosing a photograph came to hand:

BLACK RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN, *January 6th, 1875.*

MR. ROSS.—*Dear Sir*:—Your favor of 13th ult. came to hand to-day. I would say that an effort has been made to get a photograph of the child; but the artist was not skilled and the child was very uneasy, and they failed to get a correct likeness. The child has been removed into the country about twelve miles from this place. One of Pinkerton's detectives was here to-day and has gone to see him. Should he prove to be your CHARLEY, you will hear from me by telegraph.

Respectfully yours, G. W. BAILLET.

The description sent to me represents the child as having *blue* eyes, and the picture bore no resemblance to our little boy. This case has been selected from a large number to show that whenever strangers, whose actions were in the least degree suspicious, came into

any of the villages throughout the country with a small child, they were closely watched; and although many times persons influenced by an excited imagination were mistaken in their judgments, yet they evinced an earnest desire to aid us in recovering CHARLEY. As before stated, the feeling in this exciting case has not been confined to our own country. I will now introduce a very interesting correspondence which comes from Europe.

WURZBURG, BAVARIA, *February 14, 1875.*

MR. ROSS.—*Dear Sir:*—As a stranger, permit me to address you. I have seen it announced in the papers that your child was lost, and I believe, from the description I have seen of him, that I know where he is and who has him. The child I saw answers the description exactly; he is four to four and one-half years old; has half-brown eyes, flaxen hair, and can speak several languages. I am acquainted with the American who has him, and can, if you telegraph me in return, immediately inquire more minutely into the matter. As the man intends leaving shortly, it would be best to act promptly. Better still if you would come in person; but telegraph without delay, as he is *surely* your CHARLEY, for the American has as much as told me so.

I hope to hear from you soon,

EDWARD MOSSNER,
Machine Foreman, with C. Thaler, in Wurzburg, Bavaria.

P. S.—I should like to have telegraphed as it is of importance; but it is not advisable; for if he should learn of the same, he has expressed himself that he would shoot himself and the child, if he should ever be compelled to give him up. He takes good care of him, and loves him as well as his life. That he is your child is not susceptible of the slightest doubt, for he personally informed me that the child was brought to his house and no one showed himself afterwards. But even if no one inquired for him, is it not suspicious that he should have fled from America to Germany? It is urgent that you act at once, as he intends to depart; but I will take pains not to lose trace of him. I rely upon your judgment whether it would not be advisable to enter legal proceedings by telegraph to keep the child.

Yours, E. MOSSNER.

The above letter is written in German, and, as will be observed, the writer speaks most positively that the child he saw was our CHARLEY. But I had received so many letters, etc., stating the same thing, that I determined to try by means of correspondence to test if possible the correctness of my correspondent's conclusions. By inquiring I obtained the name and residence of the United States Consul living nearest to Wurzburg. To him was sent the following letter by the Mayor of this city:

PHILADELPHIA, *March 4th, 1875.*

MR. JAMES W. WILSON, U. S. CONSUL, NUREMBERG, GERMANY.—*Dear Sir:*—A letter has been received by Mr. Christian K. Ross, of this city, from Edward Mossner, Machine Foreman, with C. Thaler, in Wurzburg, Bavaria, stating that he (Mossner) believes that Mr. Ross's little son CHARLEY, who was abducted from his home, July 1, 1874, is in that city with an American.

The letter Mossner writes is very indefinite; yet there is sufficient in it to warrant me to examine into the matter. Will you please see Mr. Mossner, who will point out the child to you, and by comparing the enclosed photograph and investigating the matter, you may be able to determine whether he is Mr. Ross's child. Your early attention will oblige. Respectfully yours,

W. S. STOKLEY, *Mayor.*

To this the following reply was received:

U. S. CONSULATE, NUREMBERG, *March 25, 1875.*

TO HIS HONOR, MR. WM. S. STOKLEY, MAYOR OF PHILADELPHIA.—*Dear Sir:*—Your communication of the 4th inst. and circular relative to the abducted boy, CHARLEY ROSS, was duly received on the 21st inst. I at once called on my Vice Consul, Mr. Moritz Geiershofer, who, by the way, is a patriotic citizen of Philadelphia, and told him I had a chance for him to show his humanity and good feeling for old Philadelphia; and that I wanted him to go with me to Wurzburg and probe the matter to the bottom. He was keenly anxious to do his mite for Philadelphia and her distinguished citizen, Mr. Ross. So at ten o'clock the next morning we were on our way to Wurzburg, where we

arrived at 11 A. M. Our first step was to hunt up the man, E Mossner. We found him sick at his house, out in the suburbs of the city. We found his whole family, consisting of wife, one son and three daughters, all grown, and quite excited, and *a little too positive* that the boy in question was none other than CHARLEY ROSS. They had received Mr. Ross's letter, circular, etc., etc. We thoroughly examined the family, and left them with the impression that we were on the right track. And I can assure you we both felt that it would be the happiest day of our lives, if we could be able to send you a telegram to the effect that we had secured the long-lost child. But, like all others in this case, we were doomed to disappointment.

We proceeded to the Burgomaster (Mayor) and the Commissioner of Police. They both, at once, pronounced the whole thing a swindle on the part of the Mossner family. They said that their heads were turned at the prospect of making a penny. The Commissioner of Police produced the proceedings in case of Kuderman and the American child—from which it appeared that the man Kuderman arrived in Hamburg, from San Francisco, with the child, as early as May, 1874. He (Kuderman) swore that the child was illegitimate, and had been left at his house by a Bavarian servant girl—that he had brought the child over to the grandparents, who reside in Kempton, Bavaria; that they refused to receive it; that he then came to Wurzburg; and subsequently the sisters of the mother of the child came and demanded it, and on his refusing, a suit was brought in court, where the above facts were developed, and the man was allowed to retain the child. Subsequently, some six months ago, some one, thinking he might be the abductor of CHARLEY ROSS, had him arrested with the child and examined. He was again discharged, it being satisfactorily proven that the child could not be CHARLEY ROSS, who was lost July 1st, 1874.

When we were satisfied from the legal proceedings that the boy could not be Mr. Ross's child, still we requested that the man and child be brought before us to be examined by us separately. This was done. This boy is a beautiful child of about four years of age, and in many respects resembled the description of the Ross boy. But he had no "cowlick," no "dimples," and his eyes are very beautiful *bright blue*—so distinctly *blue* you would notice it across the room. I took him in my lap and asked him if his name was not Charley; he replied "No; my name is Theodore Ehrman." I asked him his father's name; he replied, "Kuderman." I asked him if he was born in Philadelphia; he replied "in San Francisco." I then told him I had a picture for him.

and asked him if he could tell who it was. He replied in German. *Das ist ein sehr schönes Mädchen* (that is a very handsome little girl). He seemed to take the greatest fancy for his little girl, and did not like to part with it. His mouth and ears were apparently smaller than those of the photograph. This boy in Wurzburg is a very precocious and beautiful child.

The man Kuderman seemed to be a very shrewd but honest man, telling a straightforward story, etc. But there seemed to be some mystery in this case. He is believed to be receiving money from some source for the support of himself, wife and child. The child is kept clean and dressed very nicely. While we were satisfied that the boy here is not the one we wanted, we were also of the opinion that his was some undeveloped, hidden history. He seems to be an extraordinarily fine child, and is evidently of a higher order of parentage than reported by the man Kuderman.

Of course we were profoundly disappointed, though it was a satisfaction that an opportunity had been given us of doing our mite in this most extraordinary case.

In closing, I beg you to give our heartfelt sympathy to the afflicted parents of the lost child. With much respect, I am, sir,

Your obedient servant,

JAMES M. WILSON, *U. S. Consul.*

On receipt of this letter from Mr. Wilson, I immediately wrote to him, thanking him for the great interest he and his vice-consul had taken, and for the very satisfactory and thorough manner in which they had investigated the case of the Wurzburg child, at the same time saying that the child could not possibly be my little boy, as this one has *blue eyes*, while my son's are of a decided *brown* or *hazel*. My letter in reply to Mr. Wilson's failed to reach him, and November 8th, 1875, he wrote a second time to the Mayor, a few extracts from which will still further show the great interest he took to fully satisfy himself and us about the child who had been in Wurzburg.

He says:

Wurzberg Child, Traced by the United States Consul.

While, as mentioned in my letter of 25th of March, the facts seemed to be against the little boy found by me being CHARLEY ROSS, I have not been able to divest myself of the belief that he might turn out to be the right child after all. So I addressed a note to a German friend of mine living near the man Kuderman, and he promptly replied: "The birds have flown; they left on the 29th of April, leaving suddenly without consulting any one, and leaving unexpired rent, which had been paid in advance." He further wrote: "A woman living next door told me that a few days after their departure, a young American called and seemed much excited to find these people had left," etc., etc. My friend said these people went to Frankfort on the Main. Mr. Wilson continues by saying that he at once wrote to our Consul-General at Frankfort, to find out if such people were in or had been in Frankfort. The Police authorities informed the Consul that they were not and had not been there. Subsequently I addressed myself to the Mayor and Chief of Police of Wurzburg, and requested them, if possible, to trace the people, since my suspicious had been strengthened that this boy was the abducted boy, CHARLEY ROSS. In about three weeks the Mayor wrote me that the man, woman and child had been traced to the little village of Bornheim, near Frankfort. I proceeded to Frankfort, and taking Mr. Webster, our Consul-General, we went to Bornheim and had an interview with the Burgomaster and his one policeman. The policeman had a sister living in the same house. To be brief, I told the Burgomaster I must have a photograph of that child, without exciting the suspicion of the people in whose possession it was. We sent for a photographer and the policeman took him to the house, ostensibly to have the picture of his sister's little boy taken, and by a little strategy they succeeded in getting the woman to let the child be taken. It worked like a charm. The artist, while taking the other child, told the woman having charge of *my* CHARLEY, that he admired her little son, and would take his picture and make her a present of it. She consented to his taking one for her only, he, of course, keeping the negative. It gives me pleasure to be able to send the copies herewith. If it is Mr. Ross's child, he will know it, doubtless; and if the right child beyond peradventure, let him telegraph to me direct, and I will undertake to take him to Philadelphia, etc., etc. God knows I hope for the parents' sake it may turn out to be the right child, etc.

JAMES M. WILSON, *U. S. Consul.*

Again Mr. Wilson writes December 10, 1875, referring to his former letters to the Mayor, and says:

Not having heard a word from any source, and full time having elapsed, I think it possible that my letters have miscarried or fallen into wrong hands; therefore, I will send this to your personal address and enclose photograph of my little waif. In my last letter to the Mayor I gave full particulars of the present whereabouts of the child. However, if my letter was duly received, I am not surprised that it has not been answered, for I am aware it is but among many hundred hope-deferring letters you have received—letters so full of faith on the part of the authors and yet destined to give additional sorrow to your already overburdened heart.

While I have almost abandoned hope, so far as the child here is concerned, I feel it to be my duty to send you this letter and photograph. Please inform me, by return mail, if this is not your child, and return to me the photograph, as I wish to retain it as a *souvenir* of my labors in the interests of a common humanity, etc., etc. I have the honor to be, dear sir, with deep sympathy,

Your obedient servant,

Signed, JAMES M. WILSON, *U. S. Consul.*

On the 23d of November I replied to the letter which the Mayor received as follows:

PHILADELPHIA, *November 23, 1875.*

JAMES M. WILSON, ESQ., U. S. CONSUL, NUREMBERG, GERMANY.—*Dear Sir:*—His Honor, Mayor Stokley, desires me to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 8th inst., with enclosures of photographs.

I take pleasure in doing so, not that the child which you have so persistently followed up is my little CHARLEY, but because you have taken so great interest as to retrace the Wurzburg child, so as to be fully assured that no mistake had been made.

I replied to yours of March 25th, saying that the Wurzburg child could not be mine; he having *blue* eyes, while my little boy's are *brown* or *hazel.* The pictures just received confirm me that he is not CHARLEY. I am glad, however, to have the picture, as that settles the matter beyond a doubt.

As yet I am entirely in the dark as to what has become of the child; but since the publication of the letters I received from one of the abductors, a renewed impetus has been given the search; and I am daily in receipt of so many letters, reporting children astray or in bad hands, that I trust I shall yet be able to come across the right one, etc.

The suspense and anxiety are terrible; but one comfort we have—that is,

we have the universal sympathy of the civilized world, particularly since the true and only version of the whole matter is understood—kidnapping of the child for a ransom.

I judge from what you write that you expect to visit your native land during our Centennial year. If so, I should be very glad to call on you, and thank you in person for your kindness and interest. In the mean time accept my thanks. I am most respectfully yours,

CHRISTIAN K. ROSS.

On the same date as the last letter, Mr. Wilson writes again:

U. S. CONSULATE, NUREMBERG, GERMANY, *December 10, 1875.*

MR. C. K. ROSS.—*Dear Sir:*—After my letter of this A. M. was mailed, your esteemed letter of the 23d ult. came to hand. I cannot honestly say that I am pleased to learn definitely that this handsome and bright little fellow is not your long-lost CHARLEY; for I had fondly hoped that he would prove to be the right child, and that I might become instrumental, under Providence, in restoring that child to its heart-stricken parents. But it seems that it is not to be. In the meantime I am pleased to see that you still have faith and hope, which "springs eternal in the human breast." You say, "I replied to yours of March 25th, saying that the Wurzburg child could not be mine, etc., etc." That letter I never received. In the meantime there can be no harm in my still having a grain of faith left that this child here may eventually turn out to be the right one after all. I propose to keep him within tracing distance for a little time longer, etc., etc. With lively sympathy, I am, dear sir, yours,

JAMES M. WILSON, *U. S. Consul.*

I have found pleasure in giving this case so large a space in this history, partly on account of the great degree of interest manifested, and the prompt and cheerful service rendered by Mr. Wilson, but more especially because of the generous sympathy and the uniform spirit of kindness which breathes forth in these letters. It is truly encouraging to find in a stranger such kind words and acts, which tend to alleviate suffering and give grace and dignity to our common manhood. Had the child

been our CHARLEY, gladly would he have crossed the ocean with the prize. Of this I am well convinced, for no one could write so touchingly who would not have claimed and enjoyed the privilege of restoring the long-lost child to the arms of his affectionate parents.

The picture of the little boy who was so persistently followed up I have had copied. The only name by which he is known to us is that of the "Wurzburg child."

While so many persons were truly enlisted to aid in discovering the child, the vultures of society, taking advantage of the excitement that prevailed, endeavored to prey on us by concocting different schemes to extort money. A few notable instances will be related, to show the heartlessness of the wretches who undertook to excite false hopes, with the view of turning their infamous lies to profitable account, by asserting that they were possessed of information as to where CHARLEY was concealed. The first case is that of a man who desired to procure a reward in advance for information which he professed to have. The correspondence is as follows:

[A.]

'ST. LOUIS, *Dec. 25, 1874.*—MR. ROSS—*Dear Sir:*—You offer a reward for information that will lead to the recovery of CHARLEY ROSS. I know where he is, and will tell you. I would have told you before, but was afraid to; but since Douglass is dead I can tell you without fear. Last September I became acquainted accidentally with Joe Douglass and Bill Morris or Mosier (he called himself Morris then), and found out that they had Charley Ross hidden away; and they threatened to kill me if I betrayed them, but promised to pay me well to keep quiet. Now if you will give me $500 I will promise to deliver Charley into your hands within three days from the time I receive the money; or if you doubt me or my ability to do so, I will go to Philadelphia, and take you to the place where he is now hidden, if you will send me money enough to pay my expenses and take me there, say about one hundred dollars;

then after you get the boy you can pay the rest. I will pledge you my life that I can do this, and would have done so before, only I was in fear of my life, and it was only yesterday that I learned that Douglass was dead. If you will send the money, I will do all that I have promised. Address James Cannon, care W. S. Wylie, No. 1743 North Ninth street, St. Louis, Mo.

P. S. I am living six miles in the country, and Mr. Wylie is a friend, but knows nothing about this. If you send money by registered letter or money order, send it in Mr. Wylie's name. JAMES CANNON.

A reply was forwarded to this letter, saying that, as he was a stranger, before any money could be advanced for the information which he professed to have, we desired to have some responsible reference as to who he was, and if he proved to be a proper person there would be no trouble about his getting the money he wanted. To which the following answer was received:

[B.]

ST. LOUIS, *Jan. 4, 1875.*—MR. ROSS—*Dear Sir:*—Yours received. My friend, Mr. Wylie, handed me your letter this morning. I am very sorry that you could not place confidence enough in me to accept my offer. Now, I will make another one. You want me to furnish you reference. That I cannot do. I am a poor man, a perfect stranger here, and unknown to any one except a few as poor and unknown as myself, Mr. Wylie being the only man whom I know. If I could give you reference I would do so willingly; but I cannot. So, my course is plain. If you will not accept my former offer I cannot go to Philadelphia, for the simple reason that I have no money to take me there, and no friends from whom I could borrow. So, if you are not willing to send me what I asked, I will have to try and obtain some work until I can earn money enough to take me to Philadelphia. I will wait ten days for an answer to this; then if I do not get satisfactory answer I shall go to work and try and earn the money. I have in my possession written directions where to find the boy. Copies of these I will leave in charge of Mr. Wylie, so if anything should happen to me he will have the papers. They are written in cipher, so I have no fear of trusting him with them, for the secret of the key is known only to Douglass, Morris and myself. I had no hand in the stealing of the child. I became acquainted with Douglass and learned the secret, and to save myself I helped to remove him from

the place where he was then hidden to the place where he is now concealed. These papers which I have were written by Douglass to enable me to find the boy in case it became necessary to remove him. He is still in the place where he was in November, and will remain there until the party who has charge of him is ordered to produce him. He is in charge of an old deaf negro woman who can neither read nor write, and who never heard of Charley Ross, and is in such a place that no one would ever think of looking for him in that place; I will tell you your son is well, and seems to be contented. It is in my power to restore him to you, but I will not have anything to do with a second party. If we can come to no satisfactory agreement, you can have the papers containing the explicit directions where to find him and the key to read them by, for the sum mentioned in my former letter. If you will not send me money enough to pay my way to Philadelphia, you can appoint some one to act for you, and I will do the same, keeping myself in the background, and will give up these papers (along with the key), which will enable you to find your son without further trouble. Five hundred dollars is a small matter compared with your son; but with all due respect for your feelings as a father, this is the best I can do. Please think of this, and I hope you will accept one or the other of my offers, viz., either send me the sum I named and I will go to Philadelphia, or appoint some one to receive the papers and pay for them. You can address as before, in care of W. S. Wylie, No. 1743 North Ninth street. If I do not hear from you in ten days I will do as I mentioned above, go to work till I can earn money enough to take me to Philadelphia. But the sooner I get money, the sooner you get the boy. I hope it will be to your interest to accept my offer. It will do no good to question Mr. Wylie, for he knows nothing about this affair, and will not unless you reject my offer; then I shall give him the papers for safe-keeping, telling him at the same time what they are, without giving him the key to the cipher. Now, my dear sir, you can act as you deem best; but if there is anything like treachery in your manner of dealing with me, I shall keep out of sight and you will learn no more from me. But if $500 is no object, remember that for that sum you can find your son. If you send funds, please send as directed in my last. Now, hoping soon to receive a favorable reply, I remain very truly yours, JAMES CANNON.

This letter on its receipt was regarded as a scheme to swindle, and both letters were sent to a friend in St. Louis, with a request that he would have the matter

investigated by the police authorities of that city. Captain O'Connor, chief of detectives, undertook to find Cannon, and after some trouble he secured his arrest, and took possession of all documents and letters found in his desk. The report of the Captain is as follows, also the letter in cipher to which Cannon refers in his second letter with the translation:

DETECTIVE OFFICE, FOUR COURTS, *Jan. 18, 1875.—Major L. Harrigan, Chief of Police:*—Relative to letters purporting to have been written by one James Cannon from this city to the father of the boy Charley Ross, at Philadelphia, which letters are hereunto annexed and marked respectively A and B, I have the honor to report as follows:—On Saturday afternoon last, in company with Detective Tracy, I went in pursuit of the man Cannon. After some trouble we succeeded in finding the trail of the man Wylie. Following him up, we located him on a small flat boat on the bank of the river, foot of Lebaume street, where he was living with a man named Wilson, both of whom we found to be absent across the river. I directed special officer Barney Willow, Fourth District, to watch the boat, arrest both men and secure all letters found with them. At eleven P. M. Officer Willow arrested both men, and found a large number of letters directed to W. S. Wylie at points in Arkansas and Missouri. In a desk belonging to Wylie, after careful search, I found the directions in cipher which are spoken of in letter marked B. Calling to my assistance Officer Williams, of the Third District, an expert in cipher-reading, we obtained the secret of the mysterious document, which is also annexed and marked C. Its translation is also annexed and marked D. By comparing the writing in the letters A and B and in the cipher letter with the ordinary chirography of the man Wylie, but little doubt can exist that Cannon and Wylie are one and the same person; that Wylie is the inventor and engineer of the whole thing, which is nothing less than an outrageous attempt to perpetrate a swindle upon Mr. Ross. Very respectfully,

DAN. O'CONNOR, Chief of Detectives.

[C.]

CIPHER LETTER.

Lgn Sxg ra abme jb yrun kmoo keb r w jmroonrvb ywjln an lgxcpqb Knab bx vxdn gry r anum qxc bquan mr & nlb rxwa ax lgyb gxe ljw owm gw lj anrb Knlx vua wnlon aajg bx & noxdr grv xb rw ljan xv jwg

jllrumb bx ca en ny g Kn Seppwc ro Oxqxc ernn qzdn bx lztu cqy & pn xv qw Kcb Xw gx&n uron dxwb ojru ca j&vm mxwh uxan lqnan m r & nl brxwa lgnw qxr nnj dn bqn K xjh px bx bqn qnbnu bgtn bgn lrbqb qjrvm & xym Inah Xv bqn oxwax rb. wx & bg bruw qxc lxyn bx bqn G & enw bxm lytn bqn G & & nw exjm jwm oxunxe rb ex& jKxcb henucn rwna bc&w wnrbqnb & rpbb x& unob brun xxc lxyn bx bqn on&& g G c & w bx bqn unob bqn on & & g jwm bnny xw cy bqn ab & nyb bnuw qxc yg aa vex bxj ma bytn bqn bqr & m Xun jum oxunxe rb Xun Vxvn bnur gxc Qron j & crumm lj krw ljtn bqn y j bg Kg bqn lj kum rb y ny ma r w b x bqn a g y v jum eruw bjtn gxc bx bqn gxcan eqn & n bqn X xg va Kcb v w wx ljan j & n qxc bx x cwyna a avenbqnvp qj y n i v a bx ca bq n w qxc new mx bqn Knaqb uxc Gwerbq bqn Kx g.

K. MXCPVJA.

[D.]

TRANSLATION OF CIPHER.

The boy is still at Pine Bluff, but in a different place. We thought best to move him. I send you these directions so that you can find him in case it becomes necessary to remove him, or in case of any accident to us. We may be jugged. If so, you will have to take charge of him; but on your life don't fail us, and don't lose these directions. When you leave the boat go to the hotel; take the right-hand road west of the hotel; follow it north till you come to the Warren road; take the Warren road and follow it for about twelve miles; turn neither right nor left till you come to the ferry; turn to the left at the ferry, and keep on the straight road till you pass two roads, take the third one and follow it one mile till you come to a ruined cabin; take the path by the cabin, it leads into the swamp, and will take you to the house where the boy is. But in no case are you to go unless something happens to us; then you will do the best you can with the boy. B. DOUGLASS, P

This attempted swindle was unsuccessful, and although the scoundrel was in the power of the authorities, having obtained no money, he could not be held, and after being kept in prison a few days, was discharged.

Another attempt of a similar kind was made; but this fellow was actuated by a different motive. He wrote the following letter:

NEW YORK, *March 4, 1875.*

C. K. ROSS, ESQ.—*Dear Sir:*—Something has come under my notice which leads me to believe that I can find your child, provided that I am given the means and authority to act. *I am a seafaring man.* I trust to your honor to keep this letter a secret until you see me. I am not giving you a vain hope, I am pretty sure. Answer immediately and let me know if I shall go to see you, or if you will provide the means for me to act. I am, dear sir, Yours truly,

A. S. JONES, N. Y.

(Please consider this letter confidential.)

The same day Jones's letter reached me, I received one from Bergen's Point, New Jersey, requesting me to meet the writer in New York. I telegraphed to Henderson to meet me at a hotel in New York the same evening, and to the person at Bergen's Point the next morning at the same place. Henderson called, but the train being delayed, he left the hotel before I arrived. In the morning I arranged with a detective officer of New York, and Captain Wood of Philadelphia, who had been sent to look after a child reported in New York, to go with me to find Jones. The detectives remained in the neighborhood, while I went into the place, which was a gaudily furnished drinking-house. Very soon after I entered the room Jones came in—a man about twenty-eight to thirty years of age, neatly dressed, quiet in his manner, with no appearance of intemperate habits. At first he impressed me rather favorably; after introducing myself, we went to the back part of the saloon and showing him the letter which he had written, I told him I was ready to hear what information he had relative to my little boy. Finding that he hesitated about telling, I said to him he need fear nothing, I was alone, and he should be protected from injury; he should not be molested by officers, and should receive the reward

of five thousand dollars if he gave information which would lead to the discovery of the child. After considerable parleying, he stated that he was a seafaring man, and had just arrived in New York from Cienfuegos. On the previous Monday night, while on the ferry from Brooklyn, he chanced to be standing near two men who were pretty drunk, and overheard one of the men say to the other, "How about the Ross child? It's a bad job; we ought to give the kid up." They spoke of Nova Scotia, and of the child being near Summerville. This was the substance of what, by close questioning, I obtained from him, and he declared it was all he had heard. He said he had never been to Nova Scotia, and did not know whether there was a town named Summerville in the province. I asked if he knew the men, or either of them; he said he knew one of them, and he was a very bad fellow. I asked if he could see him again. "Yes," he said, "if he looked for him." I told him that there was so little in what he had told me I could not form an opinion, and arranged with him to see the man with whom he said he was acquainted, and had heard talk on the ferry boat, and appointed another meeting with him in the afternoon.

At the appointed hour, in company with a different officer, I again went to the saloon, and found Jones waiting for me. In reply to my question, whether he had seen his man, he said: "Yes, but this is not the place to talk: we will go elsewhere; wait a few minutes." I stood with my back to the front door, and, after a pause, he said, "Now I am ready." As I turned I saw a person couching down in the corner of the room with his hat partly drawn over his eyes, appearing as though he did

not wish to be recognized. We passed him, and as we were walking on the street Jones said, "Did you notice that man behind the door of the saloon as we passed out?" I said, "I saw some one who appeared to me to be trying to conceal himself." He replied, "That is the man who gave me the information." I asked him to go with me to my hotel, and there we could talk without being interfered with; but he declined, and proposed going to a beer-garden in the neighborhood, where he could talk without being overheard.

Arriving at the garden we took seats at a small table; the officers came in very soon after us, and seated themselves on the other side of the garden. My suspicions were now aroused that something was wrong; and, in order to draw my companion out, I reiterated my former promises, provided he told the truth, and his information should result in recovering my child. He said he would not accept more than one thousand dollars under any circumstances, and did not want anything until I had possession of my son. "Let me know now what you have learned since this morning," I said to him. He began by saying that "years ago he had committed a very bad act in company with the man who gave him this information relative to my child, and was obliged to go to sea to escape punishment: when in port he was in the power of this man, who was the only person who knew of his guilt; also if he knew that he was now communicating with me he would certainly kill him." I told him it was not necessary he should be known; what I wanted was to get my child, and after he gave me the information which would secure him, he could go where he pleased with the money. After a long

and earnest conversation all I elicited from him was, that about five months ago the child was taken to Prince Edward's Island, British Provinces, and put out to board, and he could go to the place, or within a half mile of the house, and would go with me, and after I had the child I should give him one thousand dollars, and try to get him some other employment than following the sea, away from New York, as he wanted to break with his associates in that city, who, whenever he came into port, found him and led him deeper into crime. "Now Jones," I said, "I have no assurance that what you say is the truth, and don't feel warranted in undertaking such a journey on your mere word. Were you ever on Prince Edward's Island?" "Once a vessel on which I was stopped at Cape Carmiento for water, but I never went on the island," he said. "How could you go so near to the house in which the child is said to be?" "The description I have is so plain I could easily go there," he replied.

I told him I doubted his whole story, and until he gave me better evidence of its truthfulness I could not tell what I should do. He said, "I will not talk any more with you." "Why, you came here to tell me all you knew, and now you hold back; you are trifling with me, and I will not let you escape, and must know what your purposes are." He emphatically declined saying anything more at that time, and appointed another meeting at my hotel at eight o'clock the same night, when he said he would tell everything, and also state his plan of investigating the matter. He said he boarded opposite the saloon in which we had met, and had a wife living in Boston. He said, "My family have

all discarded me on account of my bad conduct, and I want to reform. Mr. Ross, I'll see you to-night, but will not talk with you any more at this time."

Finding the fellow was stubborn, I let him go, believing if he really had any information he would come to the hotel, and if he had a scheme he would also come, as he had not yet accomplished his designs. As he left me I told him I should have a friend with me in my room, who would hear what was said, but would not interfere in any way to harm or disturb him. He consented, and went off, the officers following him, and finding that he went to a sailor boarding-house opposite the saloon, as he had said.

About half past eight o'clock Jones came to the hotel, and with Officer Wood we went up to my room. I sent for a Gazetteer, and locked the door, putting the key in my pocket, determined to find out if possible what this fellow was after. In the presence of Mr. Wood I reiterated the promises I had made to him during the day, and stated what Jones had told me, and that his coming to-night was for the purpose of letting me know everything he had learned in relation to the child and his whereabouts. Wood assured him protection, and by entreaty and appeals, in fact in every way, tried to induce him to make a clean breast of all he professed to know. After parleying for an hour, he said, "Let me write a telegram to my wife." In this he asked her if she knew whether certain persons were still living in Alberton, Prince Edward's Island. Handing it to me, he asked to have it sent to Boston. Turning to the Gazetteer, I found that Alberton is one of the chief towns of the island. "Then your wife knows people on the

island?" I said. "She is from the island," he replied. "And yet, you say, you never were there except to touch at the said cape." "No—stop—don't send that dispatch: you write one that I will dictate. Address George Robinson, Alberton, Prince Edward's Island. Ask him if George Howard or George Wells lives there now." Mr. Wood asked him what connection that had with the case, and, after considerable delay, he replied: "If they live there, I will be better satisfied that I am right, as the child had been put to board with both of them, but was not now with either of them." "You seem to know people there," I said. "Yes, these people—my wife's relatives live there, and through them I became acquainted with these persons." I promised to send the message, and asked him to tell us what we came together to hear—the whole history of the child. He replied that he would not until I received an answer to the telegram.

It was now near midnight, Saturday, and we had not yet found out what the fellow was after; he had not asked for any money, and would not say anything more that night; but promised to see me again on Monday morning, and in the meantime would again find his informant, and get further information. Baffled and provoked by the fellow's apparent secretiveness, we concluded to let him go, knowing that he could easily be reached should he attempt to get away. We were now inclined to believed he had a plan by which to get to Prince Edward's Island, but there seemed something else which he barely hinted at, which we were not able to find out. Although I had but little faith in the fellow's story, yet not wishing to let anything pass without

a thorough investigation—and more particularly this, because in one of the abductors' letters it was stated they had been to the British Provinces—I took the telegram to the office; but there being no station in Alberton, I wrote to Mr. Robinson, asking him if he knew Jones, and the other persons named in the dispatch, etc., etc., and asked for an answer from the nearest telegraph office.

On Monday morning, by arrangement, Superintendent Walling came to the hotel, and at ten o'clock, the appointed hour, Jones made his appearance. After introducing Mr. Walling as a friend, I again stated our previous conversation, and said we were now ready to hear from him. He asked if there had been a reply to his telegram. I explained how it was not possible to get an answer. "Well, now I will tell you all I know," he said. He was an Irishman by birth, and when he came to the United States he joined the 7th New Hampshire regiment, and there became acquainted with Jim Boyd, who taught him something about seamanship: when the call was made for sailors, he with Boyd, a man named John F. Pool, and several others of the same regiment, were transferred to the navy. After their discharge from the navy Boyd and Pool enticed him to commit crimes, and to avoid arrest he went to sea; whenever he returned Pool found him out, and induced him to join in other crimes, threatening him with exposure if he declined. He thus had him in his power. This Pool, he said, was one of the men who talked on the ferry boat about CHARLEY ROSS, and proposed to him to go to Prince Edward's Island, and transfer the child to Canada. Pool said the child was

at Goodman's hotel, twelve miles from Sunnyside, in care of a man named Sinclair, and now he was ready to go with me, or any one else, and get him; afterwards he would expect to get one thousand dollars. He said that was all he had to say.

Superintendent Walling up to this time said nothing. Now, rising from the sofa on which he was seated, and looking Jones full in the face, he said, "Do you know me, Mr. Jones?" he replied "No." "Never saw me before?" "No." "I want you to go with me." The Superintendent took him to police headquarters, and said to him, "Now, Jones, if this story you have been telling is false, say so, and I will let you walk out of this office. Do not put Mr. Ross to any further trouble and expense; if you have been lying, I shall find out whether it is true or false before the day is over." He declared it was the truth. He was put in charge of an officer, and a telegram sent to one of the district station houses to have Pool, who was well known, brought to the Central office. In the meantime a telegraphic dispatch was sent to a magistrate of Prince Edward's Island to investigate the matter and report.

Pool, an uneducated but very shrewd Irishman, was brought to the office in the evening, and underwent a searching examination. Said he was a runner for United States Navy, enlisting men; had been convicted of burglary in Trenton, New Jersey, served part of his time; since then was an honest man, except he would drink, and by night he was generally pretty well set up. Said he had heard people talk about CHARLEY ROSS, but could not read, and like enough he had talked about the boy himself in the taverns; never knew of a reward

having been offered for the child; never knew Mosher or Douglas; was in the army in the 7th New Hampshire regiment; had been transferred to the navy with three or four other men, Boyd, an Italian, and a man called Jones; this last fellow was college-bred, smart. "Now, Pool," the Superintendent said, "tell all you know about CHARLEY ROSS." "Oh, indeed, Superintendent, I don't know anything, only what I hear others say." "Were you ever on Prince Edward's Island?" "No." "Whom do you know there?" "No one." "Didn't you talk with some one on the ferry boat on last Monday night about CHARLEY ROSS?" "Very likely I did—I was pretty drunk that night, and I don't know what I said. Oh, Superintendent," he said, scratching his head, "I begin to see into this thing. That rascal, Jones, wants to give me trouble; I wondered what he came after me yesterday for, and asked me to come to a saloon, and when I came there he didn't even treat; I had to pay for the drinks; and, besides, I gave him a great beating about five months ago, and now, for revenge, he has me brought here on the CHARLEY ROSS affair. I'll find him to-night, and give him the soundest drubbing he ever had."

After thoroughly examining Pool, we were satisfied he knew nothing, and let him go. He went away muttering vengeance against the college-bred scoundrel, who, as he said, had him arrested in broad daylight, when all his friends could see him walking with an officer. The Superintendent then said, "Mr. Ross, I wish you had given Jones five or ten dollars, I could then put him below; but we have no charge on which to hold him, and will have to let him go also." This fellow wanted

to satisfy his revenge on Pool for having received a beating from him, by getting Pool locked up; and also wanted to get to Prince Edward's Island, and then give me the slip. I did not hear if Pool found him, but think Jones would keep very clear of him. In about a week I received a letter from the magistrate on Prince Edward's Island, saying he could not find Sinclair, and that there was nothing in the report. This swindler kept me in New York three days, and put me to trouble and expense, without any gain to himself.

While on this visit to New York I went to see three children, each one of whom was reported as likely to be my little boy. There was only one of them who bore any resemblance to CHARLEY, and he evidently belonged to the person who had him in charge. One of the others appeared to be an American child, in an Italian family; and the third was a child whose parents had died, and a poor, warm-hearted Irish woman had taken him with the intention of providing for him.

The following telegram was received by the Mayor in reference to a child who was on a vessel which was ice-bound at Barnegat Inlet, New Jersey:

BARNEGAT, *February 2, 1875.*

MAYOR OF PHILADELPHIA.—Man, woman and three children on board a sloop at Barnegat Inlet. One of the children answers every description of CHARLEY ROSS. Will you send a detective?

Signed, ——— ———.

Efforts were at once made through the telegraph to get a description of the child; but in consequence of the sloop lying in the inlet ice-bound, she could not be reached from that side of the bay, and my brother and detective McKibbin went to examine into the matter.

Their drive of twenty-four miles through the sleet and ice during the night, was far from pleasant. On the following day, arriving at the United States signal station, the Sergeant in command volunteered to accompany them on board the vessel. They found a man, his wife and three children—one a boy about three years old, a beautiful child—but not my CHARLEY. The man had ventured in his small craft in mid-winter, with his family, to make a voyage from New Bedford, Massachusetts, to Florida, and was very nearly wrecked, and had put into the inlet for repairs. While on this trip my brother learned that there was a scattered population who lived among the highlands and pines of Monmouth county, New Jersey, and along the shores of Raritan Bay, and on the rivers and creeks which flow into it, down to near New Brunswick, many of whom were unable to read, and few taking a newspaper. In some of these isolated places persons had little communication with their neighbors, and there were spots in which a child might be kept without a likelihood of detection. This information, together with the fact that two of the abductors' letters were posted in New Brunswick, determined us to make a thorough search through these localities, in the hope of getting information which might prove of value. Detective McKibbin and myself went to Red Bank, on the Shrewsbury river, near the lower extremity of the highlands, and were there joined by a former resident of Monmouth county, who volunteered to accompany us. At Red Bank we called on the person whose store Mosher and Douglas robbed about four years ago, and for which Mosher was arrested and lodged in jail in Freehold, New Jersey. It

was immediately after his escape from this prison that he came to Philadelphia to live.

From this person we learned that two small vessels had been lying for several days on the river, very close to the shore, not however an unusual thing. During the last night they were on the river the store was entered through the cellar, and a large amount of dry goods carried off. The proprietor on looking about in the morning discovered that both vessels had gone away. He chartered a steam-tug and followed in the direction of Staten Island and Long Island, overtook one of the boats, and on searching her discovered that the goods were not on board; but the delay occasioned by overhauling the wrong vessel, gave sufficient time for the guilty parties to escape. The men, Mosher and Douglas, were strangers in the village; no one seemed to know them; and Mosher returned to Red Bank the following morning, and remained several days, no person supposing him to be the burglar. In the case of my child's abduction, he returned to his home on the evening of the 3d of July—thus repeating the same plan adopted in the robbery. After a few weeks the vessel was found, and finally the owner of the vessel, which led to Mosher's arrest and confinement in Freehold jail. Having learned these points, our next object was to find out if any of his associates, or any other suspicious persons, lived in the neighborhood. We were informed of two thieves who were believed to be acquainted with him, both of whom had been convicted of burglary, and were now at large. We next engaged as a guide a person thoroughly acquainted with the Highlands. During the night the weather became in-

tensely cold, the thermometer fell to 6° below zero, and the wind blew a perfect hurricane from the north-west. A carriage was in waiting for us early in the morning; we went about six miles to a dense thicket of pines, where we were told there lived a woman with a small child, who had been brought to her to board a few months before. The child was not CHARLEY, and the woman said his boarding was paid regularly by some one she did not know. Returning to Red Bank, we learned that the property known as the Highlands of New Jersey is owned by three gentlemen, who are very careful not to allow persons to build houses in the gorges or valleys, and the inhabitants live mainly on the coast. They obtain a livelihood chiefly by catching clams. The houses are generally in clusters, and the weather being so extremely cold, the people were all in doors, giving us the advantage of seeing all the children at home and making all the inquiries we desired.

This search occupied two days, without resulting in anything of moment; but we met with numbers of persons who had never heard of the abduction of CHARLEY ROSS.

We then drove to Keyport, following the courses of the rivers and inlets; making inquiries at the different houses, stores, etc., to find out if any strange child had been brought into the neighborhood. We were again told of the two suspicious persons before referred to, and it was said that one of them had at his house a child which was not his own. On arriving at the village where they resided, we procured the assistance of an officer and went through both houses. In one there

was a little girl about five years old, who did not belong to the family. We here learned that between Keyport and the next village there was a large foreign population, who lived in small houses scattered through the woods and along unfrequented roads. Securing the services of a guide thoroughly familiar with every acre of the ground, we started in the morning to walk, since the pilot insisted we should have to go off the road so often that we would not be able to make any time with a horse and wagon.

During the preceding afternoon it had rained very heavily, and in the night the wind changed to the north-west, the weather again becoming intensely cold, freezing a sheet of ice all over the roads. We made our way as best we could, slipping and sliding along the road through the woods, among briars and brambles, first on one side of the path, then on the other, going into almost every house, talking with the people and looking at their children. We found very few persons who had not heard of the taking of CHARLEY ROSS. Generally the people were very kind when they understood what we were seeking; and in some instances seemed very anxious to give us all the information they possibly could, and expressed true sympathy with the hope that we would succeed in finding the child.

At one house, in a very secluded place, the mother seemed to be afraid that we would take her children away; and as long as we remained near the house, she would not permit the children to approach us or allow us to look at them, although we assured her all we hoped for was that we might hear of a strange child

having been brought into that country to board. But she was too much alarmed to talk with us at all. At the next house we spoke of her strange conduct, and the people told us she was all right, and had no children but her own, but was very timid. About one o'clock we reached the next village, pretty tired after a walk of about twelve miles over the ice, failing to get any trace of CHARLEY. We learned that Mosher and Douglas had, during the fall of 1874, been in one of the creeks that flow into the bay. The person who gave us the information knew both the men, and talked with them, and had them watched nearly all night, supposing they had come to the creek to steal his oysters.

From Little Washington, the village to which we had walked, we drove to New Brunswick. On calling upon the Chief of Police of that city, he proffered to aid us in the further prosecution of the search, and arranged with a former U. S. Marshal to go with us the following day to search along South Creek on both sides, and through the forests, wherever there were any dwelling-houses. The next day the country towards South and Perth Amboy was examined. Thus this extended search was made, we having been absent eight days without finding anything to shed light on the subject; and the only trace we discovered of the abductors was that they had been in a small vessel in one of the creeks of the Raritan bay.

Our experience has taught us that it is the easiest possible thing to be mistaken in identity, and we are almost ready to conclude that there is very little prospect of any stranger being able to recognize our little boy by looking at a picture. In nearly every instance

where persons have reported a child which they supposed was mine, it is stated that the pictures they have seen are exactly like the child they write about; and in many cases it has been difficult to convince persons that they were in error. One of the most remarkable instances of mistaken identity, not only in a child, but also in that of a man, is as follows:

BRUSH'S MILLS, NEW YORK, *April 22, 1875.*

TO THE PARENTS OF LITTLE CHARLEY ROSS.—Last Saturday there was a very strange appearing man came into our village; he had a little boy with him about six years old. The man called himself a clock tinker. He did not seem to be the boy's father. The child would not tell his name. He had hazel eyes, flaxen hair cut very short; should think it would curl if allowed to grow. They stayed in our village until Monday, and went into several houses; at each place the man told a different story. He said he was going west, and spoke of CHARLEY ROSS several times; said he had come very near being arrested; persons thought he had CHARLEY ROSS with him.

Thinking this information would be of some use to you is the reason I write. I have thought so much about it I cannot rest. If your child has been restored, let me know.

If you have any idea that this child is yours, and will begin a search immediately, I think he could be found in Northern New York, etc., etc.

Signed, ——— ———, BRUSH MILLS.

To this letter I immediately replied, enclosing a circular describing CHARLEY, and also his photograph, and asked the writer to describe more particularly both the child and the man; if possible, to say where they came from, and in fact to write everything she knew or could find out about them; also, if she could get a picture of the child and send it to me at the earliest moment.

May 8th I received a letter from the same person, saying:

Three weeks have elapsed since I saw the child; but will describe him as well as I can. He had flaxen hair, high forehead, brown

eyes; when spoken to would place one little arm over his eyes. The man stayed on a back street in the village over Sunday. A number of persons went to see the child. As soon as they began to talk about CHARLEY ROSS, the man would take the boy and go out of the house and if any person looked at the child, he would get mad. I asked the little fellow his name; he said he did not know. Asked him who his papa was; he shook his head and said, "Don't know." The child is kept in such fear that he dare not tell. On Monday two men went to arrest the man; the woman at whose house he stayed said he had gone away. Inquiry was made; but no one had seen him go away.

If the man had not mistrusted that he would have been arrested, he would not have left as he did. There *is no doubt* but the boy is your son. The man who has the child is a vicious, ugly-looking man, has every mark of a villain, has been wounded through his shoulder, scars on his face and wrists, looked as if he had been cut with a knife. He said he had travelled since February last, and was in New York City last winter, etc., etc.

How far he is from here now it is hard to tell; but may not have got far away, as the weather has been very cold since he left this place. If he gets where nothing is said of CHARLEY ROSS, and can get liquor, he would stay a week or more. Now, if you would take a part of the money that is offered as a reward, you could find him. I think he is still in this county.

Now I am *certain* that the child is little CHARLEY ROSS. May God speed the train that will bring some one to find him. It has troubled me much since I saw the child travelling with that brute of a man. Had I not been *certain* about this being your child, I should never have written to you.

Signed, ——— ———, BRUSH'S MILLS.

To this letter I replied, and enclosed a photograph of a person for whom search had been made without being able to find him—and having, the same day on which I received the above letter, received information that the man we had been inquiring for had gone to Vermont or Canada, I asked her to examine the picture I enclosed to her, and show it to other persons who had seen the clock-tinker, and if it resembled him to telegraph me and I would leave by the next train for

Brush's Mills. Three days afterwards I received the following telegram, dated

BRUSH'S MILLS, May 14, 1875.

The photograph is the same as the man who was here with the child.

This seemed almost conclusive that at last the right trace had been discovered, and, without delay, the same night, Lieutenant Beale was detailed to accompany me to look the parties up. We took the midnight train for New York, and at eight o'clock, A. M., next day, left via Hudson railroad for St. Albans, Vermont, arriving there at six o'clock, A. M., the following morning (Sunday). We were compelled to remain in St. Albans until Monday morning, no trains being run on Sunday. St. Albans is one of the prettiest towns I have ever seen; beautifully located, regularly laid out, and well built. There are many very handsome stores in the town, and beautiful residences in the vicinity. Monday, left St. Albans for Brush's Mills, ninety-four miles distant, and about four miles from the Canada line. We arrived there about noon, and were received at the station by the husband of the lady who had been corresponding with me. We went directly to his house, being anxious to find the clock-tinker and the child as soon as possible.

The lady spoke very confidently that the child was my CHARLEY, and that the picture I had sent her was surely that of the man. I asked her what led her in the first place to think the child was mine; she said, "I had heard of your loss." "Had you seen a likeness, or had you seen a description of my little boy, before receiving the one I sent to you?" I asked. "I had not, but one of the neighbors had." On getting it, I found

it to be one of Pinkerton's circulars, with a lithograph likeness and a full description of our child. My faith now began to waver. "The man treated the child cruelly and threatened to kill him, and acted as though he did not belong to him," she said. After a little further conversation I asked her, "Where did the man go when he left your house?" She replied, "To the next neighbor's." I said, "We will go there, and get their impressions of the matter." These people were more enthusiastic than the others had been—all agreed that the child was afraid to talk, and could be no other than my CHARLEY. I now proposed to see the people with whom they had stayed over Sunday. Before we arrived at the house, it became known in the village what we had come for; and very soon we were joined by a goodly company of men, women and children. The house at which the man and child had stayed was occupied by an old lady and her grown-up son. I asked them to tell me what they knew of these strangers. The old lady said they came to her house on Saturday afternoon, and the man wanted to mend her clock, which he proposed to do if she would keep him and his child over Sunday. She said she pitied the child, and wanted her clock repaired, and allowed them to stay. She had talked with the little boy while the man was out, and said to me, "Mr. Ross, he cannot be your child: why, he must be eight years old, and has short stiff hair." The man had told her that the child's mother had died when he was a few months old, and he had the mother's picture with him.

Our doubts were now increased, but having heard that there had been two boxes at the express office,

marked N. B. Leatham, Brush's Mills, which had not been called for, we suspected possibly they were his, and on asking the old lady about them, she replied, "He spoke about the boxes, and had ordered them to be sent back to Chateaugay, about twenty-four miles from Brush's Mills, nearer to St. Albans." We concluded that the easiest way to find the parties was to look up the boxes, though the citizens endeavored to persuade us to scour the country for the man and child: we returned to Chateaugay. While waiting for the train quite a large company of men, women and children had gathered at the station, and talked quietly among themselves. Some of the men said, "We don't believe there ever was a child stolen; think the story was got up to sell newspapers; it makes a good story for that." As the train approached I turned to them, and said, "Gentlemen, you surely don't suppose that I would have come away up here from Philadelphia merely to get up a sensation for the newspapers. I assure you, if you are disposed to look up the man and child that has been around here, and the child proves to be mine, you shall have five thousand dollars reward for your trouble. If we don't succeed in tracing the parties somewhere, we will return and scour the whole country until we find them."

Arriving at Chateaugay we found the boxes in the express office; and on asking the hotel proprietor, if he had seen the clock-tinker and his boy, he replied, they had been about the village, and stayed over night at his house; his name was Leatham, and the clock-tinker had told him to write the child's name on the register as CHARLEY ROSS, saying the children in the

village kept calling him by that name, and he should do so also; "but, Mr. Ross," the inn-keeper added, "he is not your son; he is fully eight years old." While we were talking over the matter, a gentleman, who overheard our conversation, said, "That fellow is in prison in Malone; he was put in for ten days, for being drunk and trying to break open a door, and his time will expire this afternoon. The child is at the constable's house, about seven miles from here." The landlord drove us to see the boy; and as we approached the house we observed three or four children playing in the front yard. The largest of them was pointed out as the reputed CHARLEY ROSS. I replied, with some feeling of chagrin and disappointment, "Why, I cannot see what people mean; they suffer themselves to be deceived by becoming excited, and do not permit their judgment to act." The child was certainly eight years old, of a dark complexion, sharp features, rough and coarse hair, and the whole appearance of his face totally different from any picture I ever saw of CHARLEY. In talking with him, he said his name was Harry Leatham; he came from Canada.

We left the child, feeling that with the exercise of a little judgment we should have been spared great labor and disappointment. As we returned we met the child's father on the road, for he evidently was his father, the resemblance being striking. He was stopped and asked his name; at first he gave a false name, but afterwards said his true name was Napoleon Bonaparte Leatham. Lieutenant Beale asked him to take off his hat. There was but little resemblance in him to the picture I had sent to the lady, but which she had tele-

graphed to me was an exact likeness of him. When asked why he had his child registered CHARLEY ROSS, he said he did it when he was drunk, and the children on the street had called him by that name. The fellow was much alarmed, turned pale, and trembled so that he was obliged to hold on to the wheel of the wagon to steady himself. We left him with an injunction that in his wanderings he should never use the name of my little boy. The conclusion we arrived at was, that about ten days before the fellow had got to Brush's Mills, he had registered the child as CHARLEY ROSS, and when he arrived there the people believed he certainly was my child, and would not permit themselves to change their belief. Even after I arrived home, one or two letters were sent to the Mayor, saying that I did not certainly know my own child. I know the liability of strangers being deceived in attempting to identify a full-grown person from a picture or a description, and the difficulty is far greater in that of a child; and I have learned by experience not to rely on any statement of identity, however positively it may be made, but as quietly and as promptly as possible to get definite information to place the matter beyond doubt.

CHAPTER XI.

INTERESTING CASES OF TRACED CHILDREN—INTERVIEW WITH A SHOWMAN.

AS long as it was believed that the abductors were living, and likely to prove enemies to society, no reward was offered for the restoration of my child, which was not conditioned upon the arrest of the kidnappers. It was felt necessary for the safety of the homes in which little children are, that the villains, who had introduced into the country the atrocious crime of child stealing, should be punished, so that the deed would not be repeated. They were terribly punished—suddenly and violently their lives were forfeited while in the act of committing a less heinous offense. The villains were therefore off the record, and we believing that it was then right and proper, a reward, as stated in a previous chapter, was offered for the restoration of the child.

The time specified in the offer of that reward expired on the 2d of January, without resulting in anything of practical benefit. A number of anonymous letters were received from persons professing to have possession of CHARLEY, or claiming to know where he was secreted; answers to which were made through the newspapers, but no response was in any case ever received.

With the death of Mosher and Douglas, the hope of a speedy return of our stolen child was raised to the

highest pitch. Indeed, it seemed almost a certainty, and we awaited his coming in almost breathless suspense. The quivering between hope and fear, the agonizing doubts, as moment after moment went slowly by, became almost beyond endurance, and the strain seemed more than human strength could bear. To be brought seemingly so near to the recovery of our dear little boy, and still to be left to excruciating uncertainty, is terrible. Yet with the uncertainty that hung over the fate of the child, vigorous efforts continued to be made to discover the place of his concealment. Among other measures that were adopted, in the hope of leading to that result, was that of preparing a circular letter, with a photographic picture of CHARLEY attached on the upper margin. This letter is as follows:

DEAR SIR.—The abduction of CHARLES BREWSTER ROSS from Germantown, on July 1st, 1874, has awakened universal sympathy and much active effort in all parts of the country.

Since the killing of the burglars Mosher and Douglas, (who were, without doubt, the abductors of the child,) at Bay Ridge, Long Island, on December 14th, 1874, a reward of $5,000 has been offered for his return, but thus far without result.

The object of this communication is to ask you personally to interest yourself in the search for the missing child, and to induce, if possible, the constables connected with your office to examine thoroughly all secluded places, caves, cabins, suspicious houses, vessels, canal-boats, and any other localities in your jurisdiction where it might be possible to conceal a child.

Here follow descriptions of the child, the abductors, the horse, wagon and boat used by them, the latter found at Bay Ridge; after which are given facts obtained from letters written by the abductors, and from other sources.

After leaving Palmer and Richmond Streets, Philadelphia, about six

o'clock, P. M., July 1st, the abductors drove toward the city of Trenton, N. J., through which they said they passed on the night of July 2d, and on Bridge Street dropped the boy's hat—a broad-rimmed unbleached Panama, with black ribbon, and without binding. After this, they may have driven toward some one of the streams of water emptying into Raritan or Newark Bay, or possibly as far as Newark, but this is very uncertain. The abductors returned to Philadelphia July 3d, where they mailed letters during the month. In August, letters were mailed from New York City, and occasionally from other points, as Rondout, and subsequently from New Haven, New Brunswick, New York, and Philadelphia, down to November 20th.

There is good reason to believe that these men were in a row-boat on the Hudson, at and near Rondout, for two days about August 27th.

A letter from them, dated September 23d, and post-marked New Haven, stated that CHARLEY had been suffering from stoppage of urine, and that medicine had been obtained by his custodians, which relieved him. (Inquiry of physicians or druggists in your neighborhood, with reference to this statement, might lead to a clue.)

The abductors probably made the alterations to the boat, above referred to, on the Hackensack River, about October 12th.

It is not known precisely when they began living on the water, or whether they ever had the boy on the boat. They may have delivered him to confederates after first leaving Philadelphia.

N. B.—Information as to the route taken by the abductors after leaving Philadelphia with the boy, is derived entirely from their letters, and hence may be wholly incorrect; they may have gone in an entirely different direction.

In view of the enormity and heartlessness of this crime, and the incalculable suffering it has caused and is still causing the parents and other relatives of the missing boy, I appeal to you for aid. The protracted and terrible uncertainty experienced by the parents of the child as to his fate cannot be described. To be assured even of his death would create in them a feeling of resignation; but not to know whether he is living or dead—whether, if living, he is kindly cared for or the reverse—or whether he is sick or in health—constantly oppresses them with a torturing anxiety that is well nigh unendurable. But it is needless to dwell on this point. I am convinced that your sympathies are awakened in behalf of this family, and on that account believe that you will render all the assistance in your power.

In addition to the mode of action already suggested, would it be too

much to ask of you to disseminate judiciously the facts set forth in this letter, and to use your utmost exertions to induce as many persons as possible to join in the proposed search, and in the investigation of such circumstances in your town or neighborhood as may appear likely to lead to the whereabouts of the child at any time since his abduction.

A reward of $5,000 will be paid to any person who will return the boy, or who may give information leading to his recovery.

Any information you may obtain should be sent to the undersigned, or to Geo. W. Walling, Superintendent of Police, 300 Mulberry Street, New York City. Respectfully, Yours,

W. S. STOKLEY,
Mayor of Philadelphia.

January 26th, 1875.

These circulars, numbering about 3000, were sent to the justices of the peace in all the towns and villages in Connecticut, Rhode Island and New Jersey, in Long Island, and in the counties in the State of New York bordering on the Hudson river. They were also sent to every Methodist minister, and to a large number of the Catholic clergy in the State of New Jersey, with a special request to those who visited the most secluded parts of the State, to read it to their congregations and make an appeal to the people to interest them in the search for the stolen child.

The writing of so many letters, and addressing so large a number of circulars, involved an immense amount of labor; and while nothing so far has resulted from it, yet so many responses have come back full of the liveliest sympathy, and expressing the most earnest desire to aid in the cause of humanity, that we do not feel that our time and labor have been wholly lost, and are not without hope that this effort may yet be the means of unravelling this profound secret.

In examining the laws of our State relating to kidnapping, it was found that the offense was defined to be a misdemeanor, and that no punishment was pro-

vided adequate to the crime of stealing and concealing a child for the purpose of extorting money. As no case of kidnapping for that object had ever occurred in our country, its commission seems never to have been anticipated. A supplement was now added to the former act of Assembly, making the crime a felony, and imposing severe penalties on this offense. While the bill was pending in the Legislature, I wrote to Senator Dunkel of this city, who offered the bill to the Senate, for a copy, and also for copies of any other papers relating to it. His reply to my letter expresses so much good feeling that I take pleasure in giving it publicity at this time:

SENATE CHAMBER, HARRISBURG, *January 18, 1875.*

MR. C. K. ROSS.—*Dear Sir*:—Upon my arrival here from Philadelphia this evening I received yours of the 16th inst.

I will send you a printed copy of the bill probably to-morrow or Wednesday. It is now before the Senate Judiciary Committee and will be reported to-morrow; at least so I am informed by the Chairman of the Committee (Mr. Strang).

I shall be pleased to forward you anything bearing on the subject, and shall be only too glad if my bill will be the means of accomplishing that which so many other means have failed to do, viz.: The return of your stolen boy to your distressed home. I am not a father, still I can understand, in some degree, the amount of suffering endured by yourself and wife. Had I known that your place of business was so near to my office I should certainly have called on you, and explained in detail the provisions of the bill.

I think it will pass both Houses by a unanimous vote before another week goes by. I shall be in the city on Friday evening and will be pleased to call on you or have you call on me, should you find it convenient to do so.

Hoping, dear sir, that the darkest hours in your long days of suffering are passed, and that your home may soon be brightened by the return of your darling, I have the honor to be

Your very obedient servant,

A. K. DUNKEL.

The law was passed unanimously by both branches of the Legislature, and approved by the Governor of the State, February 25, 1875.

On the same day the Mayor of the City issued the following Proclamation:

MAYOR'S OFFICE, CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, *February 25, 1875.*

To all whom it may concern, I hereby give notice that the Legislature of Pennsylvania has passed an act which this day received the approval of the Governor, entitled, "A supplement to the act approved March 31st, 1869, entitled an act to consolidate, revise and amend the penal laws of this Commonwealth, further defining the offense of kidnapping, and affixing additional penalties thereto."

Said act provides, First: That if any person shall maliciously, either by force or fraud, lead, take or carry away, or decoy, or entice away, any child under the age of ten years, from its parent or parents, or any other person having the lawful charge or care of such child or the possession of such child, with the intent to extort money or any valuable thing from the parent or any other person, for the restoration of such child, every such person shall be guilty of a felony, and upon conviction thereof shall be sentenced to pay a fine not exceeding ten thousand dollars and to undergo an imprisonment, by separate and solitary confinement at labor, for a period not exceeding twenty-five years.

Second, If any person, within this Commonwealth, shall knowingly conceal, harbor or detain, or assist in concealing, harboring or detaining any such child, so taken, carried away or enticed as aforesaid, either within or without this Commonwealth, every such person shall be guilty of a felony, and upon conviction thereof, be sentenced to pay a fine not exceeding five thousand dollars, and to undergo an imprisonment, by separate and solitary confinement at labor, not exceeding fifteen years. And,

Third, It holds out to any person or persons now having in their possession any child so taken or carried away, the following inducements to bring it into this State and surrender it: Provided, That this act shall not apply to the detaining or concealing of any child taken or carried away before the passage of this act, where the person or persons so harboring or concealing shall, within thirty days after the passage of this act, surrender up such child to the custody of the nearest magistrate or

justice of the peace, or to the sheriff of any county within this Commonwealth.

This immunity will expire on the 25th day of March, 1875.

WILLIAM S. STOKLEY,
Mayor of the City of Philadelphia.

To the foregoing proclamation I added the following:

The above act having been passed by the Legislature of the State of Pennsylvania and been approved by the Governor, is now in full force.

The last clause applies to the recovery of my son CHARLES BREWSTER ROSS, abducted from the vicinity of my residence, Germantown, Pennsylvania, on the 1st of July, 1874.

I am satisfied that both of the abductors were killed at Bay Ridge, Long Island, on the morning of December 14th, 1874. And now, in addition to the immunity from punishment guaranteed by the above law, I will give satisfactory assurance to any person having custody of the child, or who shall be the medium through whom he shall be restored to me, that I will pay whatever sum of money is required, up to $5,000, for expenses or otherwise in bringing about his restoration.

CHRISTIAN K. ROSS.

The Mayor's proclamation, with my proposition, was published in all the leading newspapers of the principal cities in Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey, and was copied by nearly all the papers throughout the Middle and Eastern States, thus giving it the widest publicity.

This immunity from punishment for thirty days, so freely granted by our Legislature, to any person having the custody of the child, and who would restore him within the specified time, added to the inducement of the reward offered, once more stimulated our expectations to the highest pitch, that CHARLEY would soon be returned. Anxiously did we wait for the arrival of every mail, and nervously open every letter, hoping that the gladsome intelligence would be communicated

from some quarter that the stolen one had been recovered. Day after day passed away, yet no intelligence of the child was received; and, as the limited time in which the last clause of the recent act of the Legislature held good was about to expire, we began to fear that nothing but disappointment would result from this extraordinary effort to solve the mystery. Truly, when the 25th day of March—the last of the thirty days—passed away without getting any intelligence of our darling child, our hearts were sick, and for the time we were almost ready to abandon all hope of ever again seeing him, or of knowing what had become him.

It seemed that everything that ingenuity, perseverance, energy, official, and individual co-operation could do to restore the child, had been done. The two principals in the heartless, cruel abduction had paid the penalty of another crime with their lives; but their violent and sudden death only obscured the secret, and increased the difficulty of the search; yet there was reserved for us a still more bitter draught to drink—prepared by the fiendish cruelty of those with whom the abductors entrusted the child, and who continued to suppress the knowledge of his fate. It is even more savagely wicked than the original crime itself.

Yet, with the uncertainty which enshrouds the case, we have always felt that it would be wrong ever to say that all hope is abandoned; for hope will cling to every straw that the doubt of an unknown fate continues to throw on the stream of time; and with energy, sometimes flagging and again buoyant, we resumed the search, and examined every thing reported to us which seemed to have any connection with the case, not know-

ing at what time, or in what way, the hard problem would be solved. It may be reserved for some Providence to discover the child, just such as disclosed the whereabouts of the brigands; and while we continue to watch closely all that transpires near at hand, we do not neglect to examine everything reported at a distance. We cannot tell what apparently trifling thing may lead us to the result so much desired. Providence in the accomplishment of His purposes works in wonderfully diversified ways, and oftentimes selects the most unlikely and unpromising instruments to develop His inscrutable designs.

Our time and attention, from this period to the present time, has been chiefly occupied in tracing children in different parts of the country, who were supposed to be CHARLEY ROSS; and scarcely a day passes without a report of one or more children who are thought to be the missing child. By the immense number of pictures of different kinds which have been distributed throughout the country, CHARLEY'S face has become so familiar that whenever there is a child who bears a slight resemblance to it, in charge of persons not well known, or to whom any suspicious circumstances are attached, we hear of him either by telegraph or by letter.

Among the most difficult to trace satisfactorily, are children who have assumed, or to whom has been given, the name of CHARLEY ROSS. Many instances of this kind have occurred, not only in the large cities, but in far distant places. Singular as it may seem, even little children in our city have heard so much about CHARLEY ROSS, that whenever they see another child resembling the picture which they so well know, they are

ready to call out, "There is CHARLEY ROSS." An instance of this kind came under my notice a short time ago: a lady in passing through one of the small streets of the city observed a little fellow about the age of CHARLEY, with long flaxen curls, full round face, and brown eyes, and heard him called "CHARLEY ROSS." At once she assumed that he was my little son, and reported where he could be seen. On going to the house I found the people had recently moved into the neighborhood, and, while talking with the mother, a little fellow ran by me, followed by a troop of other children, singing out at the top of their voices, "CHARLEY ROSS! CHARLEY ROSS!" The child's mother looked confused, and said, "Those children annoy us very much; they will call our little boy CHARLEY ROSS; and frequently when I am with the child on the street, I have been asked if the little boy with me is not the missing child. His middle name is Ross, and we usually call him by that name." I told her the child resembled my little boy slightly, and to prevent her being annoyed again by persons asking her questions about the child, I gave her a certificate, stating that I had seen her child and that he was not my son.

A short time ago two little children, a boy and girl, who had wandered from their homes and were picked up on the street at night, were brought to a station-house; an officer asked the boy, "What's your name?" He replied, "CHARLEY ROSS." Turning to the girl, he asked her, "What is your name?" She replied, "CHARLEY ROSS too." Whether these children supposed all lost children must be called CHARLEY ROSS, or whether they thought that by assuming the name they would

secure kind treatment from the officer, I do not know. These cases in the cities were soon disposed of; not so, however, those occuring in the country. A case of this kind, which I will now relate, occupied much labor and correspondence before the lady having possession of the child—reported to us by herself—could be convinced that he was not our little boy. Indeed, we are still unable to understand how the child could answer correctly so many questions, and speak of things connected with our home, with which none were acquainted except members of our family. By permission of the lady a few extracts from her letters are given, without however mentioning her name or place of residence. The first letter I received from her, is dated October 20, 1875:

CHRISTIAN K. ROSS.—*Dear Sir:*—Pardon the liberty of this intrusion, if an intrusion it proves to be. I obtained out of a public institution yesterday, a little boy whose name is CHARLEY ROSS. He seems so bewildered and is so frightened that he hardly knows who are his right parents. He says he has travelled a great deal. Since he has been with me I have gained his confidence, and he has told me the whole story of his having been kidnapped; about riding in a wagon, and his brother Walter striking one of the men on his nose or mouth. He was committed to the institution under the name of CHARLEY ROSS, July 18, 1875, etc. He was put into the institution nominally for striking a little girl with a stone; but the magistrate says it was really done to take the child from the influence of a bad woman who had him in charge. His hair is light and soft, and cut very short; but he says when he was with his right mother he had long curls; he also says he is eight years old, but is small for that age. When he was taken from home his mother was sick and away from home. There are a great many more facts I could but will not now mention. Now, Mr. Ross, if you think the above sufficient to convince you that he is your child, come to see him; if not, say nothing about it, as he is such a sweet, interesting child I would like to keep him. Signed, ——— ———.

While there are many things stated in this letter which seemed to indicate that the child was really our CHARLEY, yet there are others said which made it look impossible. Of the former, his name CHARLEY ROSS; the story that he was kidnapped; that he was taken away in a wagon with his brother Walter; he is described as having hair of a light color, soft and curly; when he was taken from his home, his mother was sick and away. On receipt of this letter I wrote the lady asking her to send me a picture, and find out from the child all he could tell of his life; and also gave her questions to ask him to test his memory. I received a reply dated the 29th of October, 1865, from which I make a few extracts, principally of such things as the child said which were correct:

MR. C. K. ROSS.—*Dear Sir:*—Your favor of the 25th inst. was duly received and contents noted. I have done as you requested, in regard to questioning CHARLEY, as far as possible; but it is exceedingly difficult to get him to say anything about Philadelphia—he seems to dread to think of it, and I can only get him to speak of it when he is earnestly playing in the house. I gave him a box of toys with churches, trees, houses, horses, men, etc., etc., and to-day he built Philadelphia where he lived, and showed my daughter and me every thing about his home, and personated his brothers, sisters, etc. He says: "Here is Uncle Joe; there is me going up to him to get candy. There is Walter and Annie, with a yellow dress on; there is Aunt Lewis and Cousin Frank walking on the railroad; and here are all the trees, with chickens on them and me throwing at them; in the back yard is Uncle Joe and all his horses; the house is the second from the corner of the street, on the old lane that's been there twenty years—Washington Lane." I asked him, when alone, who gave him candy at Uncle Joe's. He said "Why, he did himself." When asked, "How did you go to Philadelphia?" he replied, "On the Philadelphia train, and sometimes in an omnibus." He speaks of a Sophia, sometimes as his sister and at other times as his cousin. He says he was in a Catholic school at one time, and his name was Rossey there.

The lady then writes of the child as talking about a circus and circus people; of his being in a cave where men were chained; and closes by saying:

The picture I send you is a cheap thing taken in a hurry. If you wish, I'll have a bust picture taken. The picture you sent me of your child resembles him a great deal more than the one I send you.

The first evening he came we thought he had blue eyes, on account of having such a fair skin; but, on looking again, he has dark soft brown eyes, and a beautiful, clear complexion. We discovered, before receiving your description of CHARLEY, that his hair was darker at the roots; but thought that it was because it had been colored. He is timid, shy with strangers. Now, Mr. Ross, if there is anything in this letter that would justify your coming to see the child, please let me know before you come so that I can prepare him to see you, for I know he will be very much frightened, etc., etc. CHARLEY is well and as happy as the day is long, and says he wants to stay with me until he is a man.

Yours respectfully,

Signed, ——— ———.

Although the picture sent was a tin type and a very poor one, yet, at a glance, we all decided that the child was not our CHARLEY. Still there were so many things stated which are correct, that we wrote again to the lady we were unable to understand how the child could tell names so correctly, and relate things which no one outside of the family could possibly know; and asked her to send us a photograph as soon as it could be taken, and also to write of any other points in the child's conversation which might bear on his identity. In the last letter the child speaks of his Uncle Joe, his aunt Lewis, his cousin Frank, his sister Sophia, of Washington Lane; and what seemed to us more striking than all else, he says, while playing with some toys, "Here are all the trees, with chickens on them and me throwing at them." During the summer in which CHARLEY was stolen a brood of chickens selected one

of the evergreens in front of the house as a roosting-place, and the children were in the habit of throwing sticks and stones at them to drive them away. And again he speaks of his Uncle Joe being in the back yard with all his horses, also perfectly correct.

As stated above, I have made selections from the letters of such things as seemed to indicate that the child was our little boy. Many other things which he said were not correct, yet there was enough stated correctly to make us extremely cautious as to our decision.

I wrote again to the lady, and explained that all the family concurred in the belief that the child in whom she was interested was not ours; but we were unable to account for the correctness of much of the story, and gave her some more questions to ask him.

On the 17th of November, 1875, she wrote as follows:

MR. C. K. ROSS.—*Dear Sir:*—Your favor of the 8th inst. was received. I have tried twice, since writing my last letter to you, to get a good picture, but am not wholly successful. The inclosed are the best I have; but are not perfect as they might be, etc., etc. In answer to the question you asked, CHARLEY said, "His ma was away from home sick, and one of his sisters was with her;" but he does not say where they were. I would like you to come to a conclusion about it, for it makes me feel uneasy about him; for if he is your child, he may be taken away from me.

Mr. Ross, you may think I am working for the reward; but, sir, my motive is a much higher and nobler one. If he is your child I shall be at liberty to tell you how I gained possession of him, as you, no doubt, think it strange that I should write you immediately after getting him. If he is yours, it will be a providential thing if I can restore him to you; for the ways of Providence are wise. Even should he prove not to be, as I think he is, 'tis truly a most remarkable case, etc., etc.

Yours respectfully,

Signed, ——— ———.

On receipt of the photographs sent to us, we were fully convinced the child was not ours, and wrote the lady to that effect; at the same time saying it was certainly the most remarkable case that had been brought to our notice. Subsequently we received several letters from the same person, giving additional conversations she had with the child. In one of her letters she stated she was still inclined to believe the child with her was ours; and, in order to satisfy her, a letter was written to a gentleman residing in the same city, asking him to investigate the matter; photographs of Mrs. Ross, Walter, and myself, were also sent to him, to find out whether the child could recognize any of the pictures when placed among a number of others; but he failed to identify any one of them. It was also ascertained that the boy was more than eight years old.

This was certainly a very wonderful case; so many sayings of the child might have been those of CHARLEY; his description corresponded so nearly with that of our little boy, and the place from which the lady had obtained him, all led us to believe that at length we had found our missing child; but as soon as the first picture reached us, we were satisfied that it was not so.

Of the many children I have seen, no one bears so striking a resemblance to our little boy as a boy found near Schuyler Falls, New York. I am not surprised that the persons in the neighborhood were enthusiastic in the belief that they really had CHARLEY, and I truly sympathized with them in their disappointment, when they were convinced they were wrong. The following letter was written to the Mayor, in substance almost identical with hundreds of others which have been received:

SCHUYLER FALLS, *August 3, 1875.*

HON. W. S. STOKLEY.—*Dear Sir*:—I know of a child who answers the description of CHARLES BREWSTER ROSS, son of C. K. Ross. The child's hair, eyes, skin and age, in fact the whole appearance is the same. The people who claim this child are a man and woman. The man has the appearance of a half-breed Indian, and the woman is of a dark complexion.

They give conflicting accounts of where they came from. The man said from one place, the woman from another. I am satisfied this child is CHARLEY ROSS. Address,

JAMES KELLY or CHARLES KELLY,
Schuyler Falls, Clinton Co., N. Y.

In addition to this letter the following note was received by Mrs. Ross:

MRS. ROSS.—*Dear Madam.*—Please come yourself to see the child near Schuyler Falls. A mother will know her child where other persons will not; and a child will be very likely to know its mother. I am a stranger to you, but feel deeply with you in the loss of your darling boy.

Signed, A MOTHER.

Schuyler Falls is a small village in northern New York, about thirteen miles west from Plattsburg, the nearest telegraph station. Efforts were made to get further information by means of the Western Union Telegraph. Mr. Kelly, the writer of the letter to the Mayor, was brought to the telegraph office in Plattsburg, and a conversation entered into with him, without, however, leading to satisfactory results. The child could not be brought to Plattsburg, and there seemed no other way of deciding the matter than to go and see the boy. I went to New York the same night, and took the first train for Plattsburg on the following morning, via the Hudson River railroad. On my arrival at White Hall, at the foot of Lake Champlain, I found that my visit was anticipated, the people having heard of the boy at Schuyler Falls, supposed to be my CHAR-

LEY. The same interest was manifested here as had been elsewhere, when it became known what was the object of my mission. I arrived in Plattsburg about four o'clock in the morning, and found Mr. Kelly waiting for me. After driving about three hours we approached the house where the child was. It is in an isolated place, about two miles from the village of Schuyler Falls, well adapted for the concealment of any person or thing; near the house was a small field of corn in which the little boy was playing. I called to him; as soon as he heard a strange voice he ran towards the house. Quickly the thought passed through my mind that the little fellow looked very much like my CHARLEY. On entering the house, I said to the woman, "I have come to see this child. He looks very much like my CHARLEY, but is not he." I took the child up, caressed him, and tried to induce him to talk, but he would not say anything. In every respect, except his expression and in the formation of the lower part of his face, he resembled our little boy. His complexion, light curly hair, brown eyes, size and roundness of form, all closely resembled CHARLEY'S, and I could not refrain from taking him in my arms. The woman said he was her child, and that she came from the interior of the State of New York, and her husband from Canada. While talking with the woman, the father came into the house—a French Canadian, with a decided mark of Indian blood. He was astonished to see so many persons; for very soon after I got into the house, the farmers living in the neighborhood came in numbers to hear my decision regarding the identity of the child. They all were greatly disappointed, and said they had

hoped he was my son, not only for my sake, but also for the child's, who was having a very miserable home. The woman said that two gentlemen from Burlington, Vermont, had been to see the child the day before, and told her of a child who was stolen, and that her little boy looked like the picture of CHARLEY ROSS. I told her if they returned she could say to them I had seen the boy, and he was not mine; and kissing the little fellow I left, feeling that the people who had been so enthusiastic in this case were not at all to be criticised for the mistake.

I have already stated that several convicts proposed to give information relative to CHARLEY, on condition that they should be released from confinement. I will now relate a case in which a prisoner attempted to raise money by claiming to know where the child was secreted.

Early in October last, a well-known gentleman of this city called at my office accompanied by a gentleman whom he introduced to me as an officer of high rank in the Union army during the late war. The officer said that while in the army he had occasion to employ some of his men as spies, that one of these men named Clark since the close of the war had for some offense been imprisoned in a penitentiary in the State of New York, and that while in prison he was put in a cell with another prisoner by the name of Jones, who confided to him that he was one of the party engaged in taking CHARLEY ROSS; was with Mosher and Douglas at the time they attempted the burglary on Long Island, but had escaped; that since their death CHARLEY ROSS had been in his keeping,

and was at that time in charge of a relative of his who did not want to get into trouble; but as soon as his time expired he intended to see Mr. Ross and arrange to give up the child and get what reward he could. Clark endeavored to find out where the child was concealed, but failed to get the information. As soon as Clark's term of imprisonment expired, he went to the city where his former commander, my informant, resided; but meeting with a soldier named Watson, who had acted with him during the war in the capacity of a spy, he told him what he had heard in the penitentiary from Jones. Clark and Watson after consultation concluded to lay the matter before their General (for that was his rank) and act under his instructions. The General became interested in the story, sent both the men to the State of New York to find Jones, with instructions to use every effort to discover the whereabouts of the child. They learned that Jones after his release from the penitentiary had gone to a neighboring city, and had been imprisoned there under the vagrant act; but becoming sick while in jail, the authorities released him on condition that he would leave the place within twenty-four hours. He went to a small city near by, joined a confederate, and the same night was captured in attempting a burglary, and he was then in jail awaiting his trial. Clark and Watson having traced Jones to the jail, went to see him; he reiterated his story to both of them, and said that he intended to get money enough by robbing the store, in which attempt he was taken, to pay his expenses to Philadelphia to see Mr. Ross. He would not at that time make any further statement, but appointed a meeting with them the following day.

During the time Clark and Watson were in jail they learned that letters written by a woman were brought to Jones, and post-marked at a village in northern New York. They also heard that a woman had visited him, and at once concluded she was the relative who had charge of the child. On the following day they called to fill their engagement with Jones, but he still refused to say anything more. They now reported all they had learned to the General, who sent Watson alone to work up the case and find the woman—with instructions as soon as he found her and the child to telegraph in cipher to him. In the meantime Jones being tried for attempted burglary, convicted and sentenced to one year's imprisonment in the penitentiary, was thus put out of the way of communicating with any one alone, unless by special permit. However, Watson thought as he was now sentenced, he would make another effort to get the secret from him, but was unable to secure a private interview with him. Foiled in this, Watson now began inquiry along the borders of northern New York for the woman who had visited the prison, and after some delay traced a woman with a child who had come from Canada, and located in a town in the State of Vermont. Having found her, Watson, now convinced that he had the right woman, and that the child with her was certainly CHARLEY Ross, telegraphed to the General in cipher: "Good news, come on, bring some one to identify." It was at this stage of the investigation that he came to me, and requested me to accompany the parties for the purpose of identification. The story in some points was confirmed by letters from the sheriff and warden of two of

the prisons in which Jones had been, and there seemed enough in it to require further investigation. It was thought best that I should go and examine into it.

After two days' travel we arrived in the town where the woman and child were staying, and were met by Watson at the depot. During the conversation we had with him, he said something of there being a concert that evening, at which the child would sing. "What do you say?" said I, "a concert! My child cannot sing —there is a mistake. However, since I am here, I will see the child." After walking to the outskirts of the town, as we approached a cluster of cottages we observed a woman and a child on the side-walk, dressed as though they were going to a public place of amusement; and, addressing a gentleman who was walking with me, I said, "That is no doubt the child; he is entirely too large for my little boy." My friend, not satisfied with my decision, spoke to the woman, who immediately suspecting what had brought us to see her—for Watson had been watching her house for several days, and she had heard that she was suspected of having the stolen child—became greatly excited, and threatened my friend for daring to intimate that the child was CHARLEY ROSS. A crowd now began to collect, and we beat a hasty retreat, leaving the field to the lady and her child.

On arriving at the hotel, I questioned Watson about his false clue. He said he was mistaken, and had followed the wrong woman, but was certain he was on the right track, and if he could get a private interview with Jones in the penitentiary, he had no doubt that Jones would divulge the whole matter. I did not feel willing

to let the matter rest here, and sent Watson out of the town to avoid being arrested, as the woman had threatened; and arranged to send him a pass from some one in authority to have a private interview with Jones. Feeling that I ought not to leave the place without seeing the lady who had been so annoyed by our looking at her child, I went to the hall before the time of beginning the concert, and sent my name in with a request that she would allow me to explain the object of my visit. An interview being granted, I began to apologize for interrupting them; when I was stopped by several young women, who, with the mother of the child—all talking at one time—greeted me with such a volley of words that under ordinary circumstances I should have gladly escaped; but feeling they had some cause for offense, I heard them through, and then asked their pardon for any annoyance I had caused them, and left the town the same night.

We stopped at the capital of the State, and obtained from the attorney general the pass into the penitentiary, sent it to Watson, and returned home to await further developments. A day or two after our return, Watson also came back, and said he had failed to get anything more from Jones, except that he gave him the name and address of the attorney who had defended him at his last trial. Having determined I would find out the truth of this story, if it was at all possible, I went personally to see this attorney, who resides in the State of New York. After introducing myself, I asked if he was counsel for Jones who had been recently convicted for attempted burglary, and was now serving his time in the penitentiary. He replied that he had defended

him. I then told him what I had heard: that Jones had spoken to Clark, his fellow prisoner, and also to Watson, of having possession of my son. He replied, "Mr. Ross, I know all about that; I claim that Jones would have got five years instead of one, if I had not been employed in the case. When in our jail, he sent for me to defend him. I asked how he expected to pay me? He replied, "There were two men here yesterday, to whom I told that I knew all about CHARLEY ROSS, where he is, and who had him; and I had intended to see Mr. Ross to make an exchange, giving up the child for the reward, but was picked up too soon. One of these men was in prison in the same cell with me a short time ago, to whom I told the same story, and he has brought another person who has money to buy me out, and they will be here to-day; and I expect to get six or eight hundred dollars for locating the child, and will give this money to you for your fee, if you will defend me in this case."

The attorney said to me that he did not think that proposition altogether legitimate, and he tried to find out from Jones if there was any truth in his story. He said to Jones, "There is a reward offered for the child, and if what you say is true, tell me where he is and I will get him, restore him to his parents, and divide the reward between you and your mother, after reserving my fee for defending you;" and added to me, "I considered that legitimate, Mr. Ross." The fellow confessed it was all a lie, and he knew nothing; but expected to get money out of some one, and as he was now in a tight place, he thought he would make it out of the person who had been brought to the jail by his fellow-prisoner.

The attorney was satisfied that the scoundrel had been lying, and said, "Mr. Ross, you would have heard from me six weeks ago, if there had been any truth in what the fellow said, and I would have made out of it what I could. The woman who called at the prison was his mother, a very respectable woman. My fee was paid by his mother and brother; he was sentenced to one year, and I think will not live many months. If you would like to talk with him, I will go with you to the penitentiary, if you pay my expenses and give me a fair compensation for my time and services. You see, sir, I am a man of business, and don't wholly depend on the law. I have just returned from a county fair, where I have some fine cattle on exhibition, and I have a farm outside of the city; I am also engaged in the iron business. My time is well taken up, but still I will go with you of course, if you pay me; but I think I did everything to get the rascal to tell the truth, and don't believe you will gain anything by the trip." I thought that a person who had so sharp an eye to business, when there was a prospect of getting his fee in a way he called legitimate, had got the truth out of Jones, and told him I would rest satisfied that the whole story was false.

When on this trip, as the train about noon approached Rutland, Vermont, I observed that a circus and menagerie company were exhibiting, and a person in the car remarked that they had a wax figure of CHARLEY ROSS on exhibition. Learning that we would have to wait in Rutland about two hours for the train which was to take us to our destination, I proposed to my friends to visit the wax figure. After dining, we went

in the direction of the show. Large crowds of people, on foot, on horseback, and in wagons, were wending their way in the same direction. After entering the tent, our object was first to see the wax image, which was in the wagon nearest the door. The wagon or cage was divided into two compartments, in the first of which was a representation of what was called the "Intemperate Family;" in the other was what the proprietor called the "The Ross Family," consisting of five persons. The figure called CHARLEY was that of a very handsome child, of about his age and size, with long flaxen hair, which looked as if it had been curled, but was flowing when we saw it. He had dark brown eyes and features rather sharp, was dressed in a linen suit, and was standing on a pedestal in front of a small table, with one arm resting on it. He was represented as being about to speak to a little girl, supposed to be his eldest sister, who was seated on a small chair at the end of the table. At one end of the table near the little girl was the figure of a lady supposed to represent Mrs. Ross. She had a sad countenance, and was dressed in a light green silk dress, trimmed in the extreme of fashion. At the other end of the table was a figure of a man with florid complexion, large moustache of a dark color, with a clean-shaven face, apparently about thirty-five years of age, supposed to be myself. By the side of the man there was a little boy about three years old, dressed in a sailor suit and mounted on a hobby-horse. The representation of CHARLEY, in which I was most interested, was not a likeness of him. It lacked his roundness of features, and the expression of the face was entirely different from his.

On the pedestal on which the figure of CHARLEY was standing there was pasted a placard as follows:

THE ROSS FAMILY.

I will give to any one who will restore to me the lost child, CHARLEY B. ROSS, or who will give me any information which will lead to his recovery, the sum of $2,000. [Signed by the Proprietor.]

After looking at the group a few minutes, we walked round the circle of wagons, in which were other wax figures and animals, and then returned to the van which contained "The Ross Family," and found the space so crowded that it was difficult to get near.

The friend who accompanied me suggested that we should take different positions, and hear the remarks made by the visitors. A gentleman and lady came near to where I stood, and looking at the group a few moments, the man said to the lady, pointing to the figure of CHARLEY: "That's CHARLEY ROSS." The lady replied, "Ain't he handsome; how much he looks like his father." The child had dark brown eyes, while mine in the figure were very light blue. Another man and woman with two children approached; the man, called the attention of his wife to the group, and raised his children up, telling them, "That little boy is CHARLEY ROSS, who was stolen from his home, and has not been found." And with great emphasis he continued, "I should know that child if I ever saw him anywhere." Many other remarks were made by different persons which seemed to us ludicrous; yet they showed the sympathy and kind feelings of the people.

Having heard when in Burlington, Vermont, a few months before this time, that Smith's circus had a wax

figure of CHARLEY and had distributed printed handbills describing him, and setting forth that the boy's parents had offered $5,000 reward for his recovery, and the ladies of Philadelphia would give $3,000 more, and that Smith himself would add $2,000, I went to the doorkeeper and asked if they also distributed circulars? he answered, "No." I asked him if many persons came to see this group. He replied, "Many persons who would not go to a circus come to see CHARLEY ROSS;" and while talking to the doorkeeper, I overheard a person calling the proprietor of the show by name. At once I turned to my friend, who was still interested in the remarks made by the crowd, and told him that I would talk with the proprietor. He replied, "I know him, and will introduce you to him." He introduced me by the name which I had assumed, Mr. Robinson. After a few casual remarks between the proprietor and my friend, I said to the proprietor:

"I see you have a wax representation of the Ross family?" He said:

"Yes."

"Is it attractive?" I asked.

"Oh, yes, the space around the wagon is generally crowded, as you see it is now. Many persons come to see CHARLEY ROSS who would not go to a circus."

"Then it must be profitable?"

"Yes, more so than any other thing. It's no expense to me."

"Is the likeness of CHARLEY regarded as a good one?"

"Yes, it is taken from a picture."

"Where did you get the picture?"

"From the family."

"I see you have also the father and mother, and two other children; are they good representations?

"Yes, I know Mr. and Mrs. Ross well. My winter quarters are only about one mile from their residence, and I have seen them often, and have been to their house."

"How about the other children in the group?"

"Oh, they have other children besides CHARLEY, and those are good likenesses of two of the other children."

"How about CHARLEY'S hair? I always heard that when it was long it curled easily, while the hair on that figure is straight."

"Well, you see, it's a damp day; and, although the hair was curled, we cannot without a great deal of trouble keep the curls in."

After continuing the conversation a while, I could not restrain myself longer from telling him who I was, and nodded to my friend, who was so ashamed at the trap in which the proprietor was caught, that he signified to me not to do it. I again asked the showman a number of other questions, and his replies involved him in greater straits. I then turned, and looking him full in the face, said;

"Do you think I look like the man you have represented in the cage?"

After taking a fair look at me, he replied:

"No."

"Well, sir, I am the father of CHARLEY ROSS," at the same time handing him a photograph likeness of CHARLEY. My friend also was obliged to confirm my statement. The proprietor was so dumfounded that he

could not say anything for a minute, and looked as though he would like to hide himself if he could; but rallying, he said:

"My goodness, you aint CHARLEY Ross's father," and taking both of my hands, said, "How I do sympathize with you! You saw that poster on the pedestal on which the figure of your little boy stands; well, I'll give $2000 for the information where your little boy is, and nothing would please me better than to have a chance to pay it; and I don't think I do you any harm by making this exhibition of yourself and family, but rather good; for, I assure you, many people see this group who would otherwise never have heard of the loss of the child; and further, I would go many miles if I could serve you."

The picture from which the wax model was made, he said, he obtained from the Mayor of our city, in whose office he said he was introduced to me. I told him he had the representation of a very pretty child, but there was no resemblance in it to my little boy. He said it was the best he could get, and that Smith's figure was made in the same mould. I then asked him how he got the rest of the family?

"Well," said he, "Mr. Ross, I'll tell *you*, but I would not care to have it known. We used to have a representation of an intemperate and of a temperate family in that van, separated by a partition; and when we got the figure of CHARLEY, we let the intemperate family stand, and changed the label of the other from the "Temperate Family" to "The Ross Family," and put the figure of CHARLEY in front as you see it. That's the way we arranged it." I was a little taken aback myself at this explanation; but the man evidently sympa-

thized deeply with me, and at the same time had an eye open to business, for as I was leaving him, he said: "Now Mr. Ross, when that boy's found I want you to let me have him to exhibit. He will draw better than anything I can get. I'll give you a thousand dollars a week for him for thirty weeks." I told him I was not considering that now. My object was to get possession of the boy, and the purpose of my visit was to see a child reported to be CHARLEY; but I had but little hope of success. I bade him good bye, and he called out again, "Remember, $30,000 for thirty weeks exhibition." He told me in the conversation that while in Canada he picked up two tramps who had a child which he supposed was my little boy, and had taken them a long distance before he was satisfied that he was wrong, thus showing his interest and earnest desire to aid us in recovering CHARLEY. I left him, feeling very kindly towards him.

It is not an unusual thing to receive letters and telegrams similar to the following: "Send me some person who can identify CHARLEY ROSS, quick;" and for some time after the abduction we were quick to respond, either by going or sending to the place from which the dispatch or letter came; but we soon learned that it was very easy for persons to be mistaken in identity, and getting so many calls to go here and there, it became necessary to adopt some other method of tracing children. The telegraph, as I have already stated, being at our service gratuitously, wherever we could we investigated cases by means of it, and generally have been successful in arriving at a satisfactory conclusion, as already related. One of the most exciting cases

publicly known of a child reported to be CHARLEY, was of a boy found in a railroad car and taken to St. Albans, Vermont. Although we were satisfied he was not CHARLEY, upon our first information of him, yet it was difficult to convince the people of St. Albans and other places that our judgment was correct. I first heard of this boy while in the cars on my way to New York. In reading the morning paper my eye rested on a telegram from St. Albans, saying that there was a child in that place who gave his name as CHARLEY ROSS, and said he was stolen from Philadelphia. On reaching New York I went to the Western Union Telegraph office, and through the kindness of the Superintendent was put in direct communication with the operator in St. Albans, asking for a description of the child, and received the following answer: "The child is about forty inches in height, has light curly hair, quite long; slim frame and features, right eye a little crossed, wears blue sailor's shirt and pants, and rough, heavy, long boots; evidently seven years old, sound teeth, and lips resembling the Ross boy's, *blue eyes*." I then asked, "Can he give the name of either of his brothers or sisters?" Answer, "Mary and Freddie." I answered, "Wrong, CHARLEY'S eyes are brown;" and I supposed it was ended there. Two or three days afterwards, I received two letters from St. Albans, one from a citizen, the other from the sheriff of the county, each covering a photograph of the boy. A few extracts from both letters are given:

ST. ALBANS, VERMONT, *December 30, 1875.*

MR. C. K. ROSS.—*Sir*:—Enclosed you will find photograph of a boy, found on night express train from Boston to Montreal, who is supposed by many persons to be your lost CHARLEY. He is, as you will

see, a bright intelligent lad, judged to be about seven years old, though some think him older. The boy says his name is CHARLEY ROSS, and he was taken from his parents in Philadelphia about two years ago. When in Philadelphia he lived in a large light-colored brick house, with brown trimmings; that he had a brother Eddie and a sister Mary; he said the house next to his father's was occupied by a Mr. McDaniels; says he has cousins by the name of Harry, Walter and Stoughton. His grandfather's name was Archie Ross; he attended school on Windsor street, and his teacher's name was Grant; his Sunday-school teacher's name was Cope. She learnt him the following hymn: "Jesus loves me, that I know," etc.; that he was taken away in a carriage; that his brother was in a carriage with him: they rode to a store where they got candy and marbles; then they went to a cemetery where his brother was left out of the wagon and he wanted to go with him, but the men said they would whip him. He says his mother's horse is called Polly, and speaks about a Dr. Dunton. He gives a remarkable account of himself and his story is straight. He is here in custody, and if you think this is worthy of your notice, telegraph to me at once. Mr. Rugg, the gentleman with whom the boy is now, is very confident that he is your little boy, and says his eyes are not blue but hazel.

D. J. MORRELL, *Sheriff.*
St. Albans, Vermont.

P. S.—The above is substantially as the boy has given the story to us.
D. J. M.

The other letter says:

There is a boy in St. Albans who says his name is CHARLEY ROSS. He was taken to Governor Smith's house, and an album given him to look over. He identified a boy by the name of Willie Stanton, which was correct, etc., etc. There are many things which he says that have been substantiated. Many of the people are anxious you should come to St. Albans, and will pay all your expenses whether he proves to be your boy or not. If you have not started before this reaches you, please telegraph that you are coming, etc., etc.

There is a difference of opinion about the color of his eyes; they are dark hazel; persons also differ in respect to his age. I will only add a few words. The people sympathize very much with you and your wife, and do not want to let this child get away until you have been here and given your opinion. Hoping that you will come immediately, etc.

I am yours truly,

Signed, ——— ———.

Other letters were received at the same time from citizens in St. Albans, giving reports of what the boy said of his past life, in one of which it was said that he could write, and gave the name of some of his schoolmates.

Before any of these letters reached me, I received the following telegrams, dated

ST. ALBANS, VERMONT.

CHRISTIAN K. ROSS.—Come to St. Albans to identify boy. Railroad fare will be paid. New satisfactory developments. Make your home at Weldon House free of expense. Answer.

Signed, PROPRIETOR OF WELDON HOUSE.

ST. ALBANS, *January 1, 1876.*

C. K. ROSS.—The boy has dark hazel eyes; come on as soon as possible; your expenses will all be paid.

Signed, LAVENDER.

And on the next day the following:

C. K. ROSS.—Have you received Sheriff Morrell's letter; if so are you coming? Your boy is here sure. People much excited. Arrive, if possible, on early morning train. Come immediately to my room. One seventy-six unnoticed. Signed, LAVENDER.

I had not received the sheriff's letter containing the photograph at the time the above telegrams were sent to me, and replied I would await the arrival of the picture, and then telegraph what I would do. But the people were so intensely in earnest that another dispatch was sent, insisting I must come to St. Albans by the next train. I now concluded I would talk to the child, and ask him some questions by telegraph, and requested the sheriff to bring him into the telegraph office in St. Albans. I asked:

"What is your name?" answer:

"CHARLEY ROSS."

"Your brother's name?"

"Eddie;"—gave names of his cousins as Walter and Harry.

"On what street or lane did you live?"

"West Albion."

"How were you taken from home?"

"In a carriage."

"Who was taken with you?"

"My brother."

"What is your eldest sister's name?"

"Mary."

The conversation was kept up until I was satisfied beyond a doubt that he was not my little boy. The only answer to the few questions given above that is correct is, that he was taken away in a carriage. I then telegraphed that the child was certainly not my CHARLEY. In answer to which the following dispatch was received: "All leading citizens had the boy to dinner and tea, etc. They have conversed with him, and all sincerely believe he is your son; there is a great excitement, and nothing will satisfy them until Mr. Ross sees him."

They further stated "that the boy had pointed out a photograph of Willie Stanton, son of Mr. M. Hall Stanton, of Philadelphia, in an album, and called him by name. Mr. Stanton is a friend of Governor Smith's, where the child was when he saw the photograph." Mr. Stanton being a resident of this city, he was brought to the telegraph office to explain if possible the puzzle. He said that he knew Governor Smith well, and his family had been visiting in the neighborhood of St. Albans for several months during last summer, but he could not tell how the child knew his

son; but promised when the picture came to hand, that he would take it and ask his little boy if he could tell who the child was. Mr. Stanton also telegraphed to Governor Smith, but received no information differing from that already in our possession. The Governor closed his dispatches by saying, "We will pay Mr. Ross's expenses if he will come up and solve this vexed question." The following morning after all this telegraphing, which was carried on nearly the whole of the preceding day, I received the sheriff's letter with the photograph, and telegraphed to him that the child was not my CHARLEY, and Mr. Stanton's son did not recognize the picture, and did not know who the boy was. At the same time I wrote the following letter:

PHILADELPHIA, *January 4, 1876.*

D. J. MORRELL, ESQ., SHERIFF OF ST. ALBANS, VERMONT.—*Dear Sir:*—I received your favor of 30th ult. with enclosure of the photograph of the child in your charge. The picture has not the faintest resemblance to my little son CHARLEY; besides, he is much too old. My little boy is five years eight months to-day. Some few things the boy has told are correct, but could be learned from circulars or newspapers; such as "Miss Cope, his Sunday-school teacher," and "Dr. Dunton, our family physician." Generally, however, his answers are far out of the way. My little boy never lived in the city proper. We live seven miles out in the country, in a sparsely-settled part. He did not know any boys in Philadelphia; never went to school. Knew only a part of his alphabet; could not write. In fact, he was a little fellow, wearing dresses when he was taken away, July the 1st, 1874. He has no brother called Eddie, or sister named Mary. We do not live in a brick house, but a stone plastered house; did not have any hired girl named Lizzie. I have no idea that my CHARLEY could give a connected account of travel; he is too young. I sent for Mr. M. Hall Stanton to come to the telegraph office yesterday, and gave him the picture to show to his son Willie, with the hope that we might trace something connected with this child who is with you. He returned it this morning saying his boy could not tell who he was. Willie Stanton had no school teacher

named Miss Grant, and he does not know any of the boys named, etc.; so I am unable to give you any information where the child belongs.

It is not an unusual thing for children who are astray to call themselves CHARLEY ROSS. I have had a number of instances of the kind, and they are the most difficult to handle, because persons reporting them will not be convinced that I would know my little boy after so long an absence. I take more pains to investigate such cases, and do not give them up until I am fully convinced I am right, which has been done in this instance.

Thanking you and the citizens who have taken such an interest in this matter, for their expressions of sympathy and kindness, I could only wish their suspicions were correct, and this long and great mystery was solved by the return of my little CHARLEY.

I am most respectfully yours,

CHRISTIAN K. ROSS.

To the gentleman who wrote and telegraphed me to come to St. Albans, and make my home at his house during my stay in the place, after giving the reasons why I was satisfied the child who had caused so great an excitement was not my son, I said:

This is not the first case that has baffled the skill of strangers to fathom. I have one that is much more remarkable, where a child not only calls himself CHARLEY ROSS, but answers many questions rightly, and relates quite a number of things which we might suppose no one could know anything about, except members of my own family or those very intimate with it: and yet, when fully investigated, proved to be wrong. Experience has taught me, in the past eighteen months, not to jump at conclusions too hastily, but to examine first. I then do not feel disappointed so greatly (which has thus far been my lot).

The child you have has either read or heard read the Pinkerton circulars which were issued last summer a year (1874) in which questions were asked and the answers given, that strangers might more readily find out from any child they might deem suspicious if he was really mine, etc., etc. I have written to you fully, as well as to the Sheriff, to satisfy those who were so deeply interested why I have not been to St. Albans to identify the child. I considered it would be a useless expense of both time and money. I think, however, that the child with you has been to Philadelphia, and being observant, has picked up some knowledge of

places, etc., which with the assumption of the name of CHARLEY ROSS has deceived those who have been interested in the case. Hoping you may get the truth and find out where the boy belongs,

I am yours truly, CHRISTIAN K. ROSS.

Notwithstanding the most rigid examination by different persons in St. Albans, the boy maintained that he was CHARLEY ROSS and no one else. He was reclothed and feted by the kind citizens; and although the reasons which I gave that he could not be my child were unanswerable, yet many persons clung to the belief that I was mistaken; and not until the child was on his way to Milford, New Hampshire, where his mother lived, did he confess that he had been imposing on the people. His name proved to be Jimmy Blanchard. Many persons at the time criticised my course in not going to St. Albans and personally examining the boy. I also received not a few letters from persons in different places who attempted to argue that the boy was mine, stating that I would not know him after so long an absence. Mr. Stanton's family, with his little boy Willie, had been to Milford for a few days at a military encampment, and the Blanchard boy heard from Willie Stanton what he knew of places in and around Philadelphia, and his fertile imagination supplied the rest.

While I was sorry that the people of St. Albans had been imposed on, yet the kind treatment bestowed on the little deceiver was evidence of what my own child would have received had he fallen into their generous hands.

Among the first questions we have asked, whenever a child was reported, who was thought to be CHARLEY,

has been, "What is the color of the eyes?" and out of the large number of children who have been traced, who have a light or fair complexion, and light hair, but few have dark eyes; generally they are blue or bluish gray. This test frequently has been the only one on which our decisions have been based; yet we have found that it is not altogether safe to rely on the judgment of persons in this respect. Men are generally very unreliable in distinguishing shades of color. In many instances when several men have given their opinion as to color of the eyes of a child who was standing before them, they have differed; and even the same person has, at a different time, given a different opinion; and when that is the only test within our reach, we ask that a woman may examine the child's eyes, and have found her decision much more likely to be correct.

I remember an instance in which a man reported a child, of whose idenity with CHARLEY ROSS he was certain, and when asked about the color of his eyes, answered so decidedly wrong that we supposed the matter was settled; but soon he changed his opinion as to the color, and the subsequent tracing of the child involved considerable labor and expense. The following telegram was received at the Mayor's office in this case:

MONROE, MICHIGAN, *September 5, 1875.*

MAYOR OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA.—CHARLEY ROSS is alive, and is in this state. M. MILLER.

This dispatch was taken to Mr. Robinson, Manager of the Western Union Telegraph Company, and he asked the operator at Monroe, Michigan,

Who is M. Miller? Where is the child mentioned by him? What the color of his eyes?

To which the following reply was sent:

MONROE, MICHIGAN.

Miller is here; says child's eyes are blue.

To which Mr. Robinson answered:

Thanks for kindness; CHARLEY ROSS has hazel or brown eyes. The child Miller refers to is wrong.

We supposed that it was decided; but very soon Mr. Miller returned to the office in Monroe, and sent the following dispatch:

MONROE, MICHIGAN, *September, 1875.*

Miller has just been in; says the boy has brown eyes, and is undoubtedly CHARLEY ROSS. He pounded his fist on the desk, and says with emphasis that he is not mistaken. Signed. OPERATOR.

The next question that was asked was:

Where is the child? Can you see it or get it in our office? Ross family cannot leave the city now. ROBINSON.

The answer to the above is as follows:

MONROE, MICHIGAN, *September 11.*

Miller wont tell anything; wants Ross to come or send some one. He is quite positive the clue is right. Signed, OPERATOR.

A reply was sent:

PHILADELPHIA.

Out of the question for any of the Ross family to leave the city at this time. Is it not possible to have the child brought to our office?

ROBINSON.

Answer:

MONROE, MICHIGAN.

Man thinks Ross should come immediately, or child will be removed.

Signed, OPERATOR.

To Monroe, Michigan:

PHILADELPHIA, *September 11, 1875.*

I will submit correspondence to Mr. Ross, who is at court, and answer. Afraid clue is wrong. Ross cannot leave Philadelphia now. Why wont Miller give particulars? Try and get them, and answer.

ROBINSON.

At this time the Superintendent of the Telegraph

Company at Detroit was informed of what was going over the wires at Monroe, Michigan, and Philadelphia, and sent the following message to Mr. Merrihew, Superintendent in Philadelphia:

DETROIT, MICHIGAN, *September 2, 1875.*

JAMES MERRIHEW, SUPERINTENDENT W. U. TELEGRAPH COMPANY, PHILADELPHIA.—Our operator at Monroe reports that Miller, the man who has been in correspondence with the Ross family, is confident that CHARLEY is in Monroe. Miller, when in our office, declared confidently that he was not mistaken. It is worthy of further investigation. If I can render Mr. Ross any assistance, call on me. C. FOX,

Superintendent W. U. Telegraph Co.

To which Mr. Merrihew replied:

PHILADELPHIA, *September 2.*

C. FOX, SUPERINTENDENT W. U. TELEGRAPH COMPANY, DETROIT, MICHIGAN.—My chief clerk, William B. Gill, and Manager Robinson's brother, are in the West somewhere. I will endeavor to find them, and request them to visit Monroe and investigate the matter. It is impossible for any one of the Ross family to leave the city at this time. An important trial is pending which requires their presence.

J. MERRIHEW, *Superintendent.*

The next thing that was required was to find Messrs. Gill and Robinson, and the following message was sent to Chicago, Ill.:

PHILADELPHIA, *September 12, 1875.*

JOSEPH W. ROBINSON, care of H. C. MAYNARD, MANAGER, CHICAGO, ILL.—We have a report of a child at Monroe, Michigan, answering the description of CHARLEY ROSS. Ross family can't leave Philadelphia until after Westervelt trial. Will you and Mr. Gill put off your Denver trip, and run down to Monroe, investigate the case and report result by telegraph? H. C. ROBINSON, *Manager.*

To which the following reply was sent:

CHICAGO, ILL., *September 12, 1875.*

H. C. ROBINSON, PHILADELPHIA.—Your brother and I will go. Has Mr. Ross any instructions? We start to-night.

WM. B. GILL.

Mr. Merrihew replied as follows:

PHILADELPHIA, *September 12, 1875.*

W. B. GILL, CHICAGO, ILL.—See the child. Mr. Ross says CHARLEY'S eyes are hazel—no approach to blue or gray, might readily be taken for brown. Question the child and report the answers.

J. MERRIHEW, *Superintendent.*

On arriving in Monroe, Michigan, Mr. Gill sent the following telegram:

MONROE, MICHIGAN, *September 13, 1875.*

H. ROBINSON, PHILADELPHIA.—Arrived all right. Boy is about twenty miles back in this country—we'll hire wagon and drive over; tell Mr. Ross.

W. B. GILL.

After seeing the child they returned to Ypsilanti, the nearest telegraph station, and sent the following message:

YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN, *September 14, 1875.*

H. C. ROBINSON, PHILADELPHIA.—Child is wrong sure. We went to school-house to-day, and Mr. Gill did the questioning. There are matters to be investigated at Detroit; will telegraph again from there.

JOSEPH ROBINSON.

When they arrived in Detroit, they examined into the matter which was connected with the case in that city, and sent the following message:

DETROIT, MICHIGAN, *September 18, 1875.*

H. C. ROBINSON, PHILADELPHIA.—We stopped over here and find out that the child near Monroe is a foundling; was taken from Children's Home at Detroit. It is not CHARLEY ROSS.

JOSEPH ROBINSON.

Messrs. Gill and Robinson further reported, after their return to Philadelphia, that on arriving in Monroe they acquainted the City Marshal with the object of their visit, who kindly consented to aid them in looking for and examining the child. They found Miller, the person who sent the first information, and learned that he really knew nothing, except what he heard from his

daughter. She was then visited, and her story was that a child in the Belleville School, who was a stranger, bore so striking a resemblance to the pictures of CHARLEY ROSS, as to warrant the belief that he was really the stolen child.

The gentlemen visited the school, and after questioning the boy a few moments, they were convinced he was not CHARLEY ROSS; and also found out that he was called Jimmy Angell, and that he was the adopted son of a family of that name living about four miles from Belleville, and his home, while attending school, was with his adopted grand-parents, who reside in that village. They also learned that the child had been taken from the Detroit Home of the Friendless.

At Detroit the statement of Mr. Angell was confirmed by the record of the institution and by the matron. The child in question had been found in Mr. J. W. Frisbee's yard, December 28, 1869. He was then apparently about three weeks old, and Mr. Frisbee sent him to the Home, where he was registered under the name of James W. Frisbee, and on the 28th of January, 1870, he was given to Mr. Angell, who lives near Monroe. Here the matter ended, and all the certainty which Mr. Miller expressed as to this child being my little boy was reduced, when he was questioned, to a very slender thread. I have given the telegraphic correspondence in this case in full, believing it will be interesting to the public to know in what way we endeavor to investigate cases by the facilities afforded us in the use of the telegraph wires.

CHAPTER XII.

A MYSTERY NOT CLEARED UP—CHILDREN TRACED IN THE UNITED STATES AND NOVA SCOTIA.

AMONG the later incidents connected with the search for my little son, none caused greater public excitement for a short time than the following letters, the first of which was received on the 4th of September, 1875. It is here given:

Mr. Ross.

If you will find the address of william or Walter Baker, and let me know through the paper, you shall have you son. Baker is the only man who hands I will trust it in. You boy is alive, but will take time for to get him. Advertise for Walter or William Baker, who wonce lived at George's Station, S. C. I think he is in Philadelphia. I want this thing settled soon, for I am worried to deth about it. I want to leave the country and I want you to have you boy, as our game is now gone up. I did not take him, but was to have a shair in the money. I know where he is and you shall have him in 5 weeks—no sooner—and no money. Westervell don't know where he is. Nor does Mrs. Mosher. I am the ONLY one. I want to get out of it the best I can.

Don't publish this, but hold quiet and find Baker, and believe me *I know*. When you have found the address of Baker put this in the pursnel column of the *Ledger*.

One of the 4. I have found him.

Don't show this to the newspaper men, for I want it quiet, and I work fast now. I pity you much.

1 OF THE 4.

To find Mr. Baker (the person mentioned in this letter) I inserted, in the personal column of the *Public Ledger*, the following advertisement:

Will Walter or William Baker, late of George's Station, S. C., send me his address?

C. K. Ross,
306 Market Street.

The publication of this advertisement brought Mr. Baker to my place of business promptly the next morning. After introducing himself, he inquired what I wanted with him. Holding up the anonymous letter at a distance, so that he could see the hand-writing, I asked, "Do you recognize that writing?" "Why, that looks like Nelse Booth's," he replied. "Who is Nelse Booth?" I asked. "A man who about two years ago worked with me in South Carolina," he replied. On further questioning, he stated that he became acquainted with Booth while in the army, and after the war had met him at George's Station, South Carolina, where he obtained employment for him, but had not seen him or heard from him for a period of eighteen months. Baker did not regard Booth as the right kind of a man, as he had proposed to him one or two enterprises which he could not conscientiously approve. He also said that Booth called himself Nelse Laurie, also Sprague. I told him the contents of the letter. He seemed surprised, and declared he knew nothing about the matter. Obtaining Baker's address, I put the following in the personal column of the *Ledger* on the 7th of September:

One of the four. I have found him.

The same morning I received the following letter:

Mr. Ross:—

You should have let me know his address through the *Ledger*. I have everything ready when I know where he is. Let me know in the *Star* just his Post office or the name and number of the street. You can put it in the "Starbeam" column or the "Personal" column. You are

delaying me. Hurry up and keep quiet. Let your notice be this way:—

* * W. B., ——— P. O.,

or the number of the street. Fill the blank with the name or number of the street or city. This must be closed to-morrow, for I must get this man. I will give a full account to [him] but to *no one else*. So make haste. * *

In answer to which I published in the evening paper the same day—

Walter Baker, No. 1619 Market Street, Philadelphia.

This advertisement was received at the newspaper office too late for classification, and appeared only in the last edition in an obscure corner, so that I had difficulty in finding it. Nevertheless Baker came to see me early next morning, to know why I had published his name and address. I explained it to him, and expressed surprise that he should have seen the advertisement. He stated that his attention had been called to it by a person who knew him. I told him I supposed he would get a communication of some kind, and that I desired to see it as soon as he received it. In the meantime, I went to the telegraph office to learn something of Baker and Booth, the professed writer of the letters. I found that Baker had lived at George's Station, and that nothing objectionable was known of him while in that place, and that Laurie under the name of Booth had also resided there a short time, and but little was known of him. Baker's description and his story of him were confirmed. After leaving George's Station he had written several letters to Baker and one to another person, in which he signed his name Nelse Laurie, and said he had written Baker several times and got no reply, and inquired whether

he was still in the place. Subsequently by letters I received full descriptions and history of both Baker and Booth while they lived in George's Station. Our suspicions were now aroused that this was another scheme to practice a deception of some kind, and we awaited further developments. Very soon after leaving me, the same day on which my last advertisement appeared, Baker returned with a letter which he said he found at his hotel, written by the same person who had been writing to me, and whom he declared to be Nelse Booth. The letter is as follows:

BAKER:—

I said if Mr. Ross let me know where you was I would tell where Charley Ross was. So I will, Baker. You have been a good friend to me and give me good advice when we was down South. You kept me out of a scrape and set me up for to get home. Now, if you will follow my advice you shall have the honor of finding Charley Ross, as I had a hand in stealing him. I want you, and no one but you, to go. If you don't go, as I say, you, nor Mr. Ross either, will ever get him. I will know all about it if you go.

CHARLEY ROSS is in England. Go first to Liverpool, then to Bradford. He is somewhere between there and York. He was placed in the hands of a family who now is in there somewhere. Thare people who calls them gipsies, but thare not gipsies. But thare traveling with a wagon where I say. You must go there very carefull, or you will not get him. You had better travel as a tramp and overhaul every band of gipsies you find in October.

After he was taken we all got skeared and he was left in my cair. I did not want to kill him, as Bill mosher did, for I was in enough sin, and wanted to get out of what I was in. But I am not out of it yet, and I will never be contented until the boy is home again. So for God's sake try your best to get him.

His hair is cut off close, his skin is dark from being in the sun, and his front teeth is out. This family thinks he is my son, and I told them his mother wanted to get him and to be very careful not to let any body have him, never, or *deth* would be their doom. The family was in York State when I gave it to them. The head man's name is Gusto,

and I heard from him by letter in July or August, I forget which. Mr. Ross and you is all I want to know anything about it.

This what I sign is not my name, but by it you will know who I am. The letter I got from Gusto was rote at Bradford, and he said he was going to New Hilton, by the way of York. NELSE BOOTHE.

I now told Baker that Booth, alias Laurie, must be found, and to clear himself of complicity in this affair, he must put us in the way of getting him. He said he would do anything required of him to help us in the case; he did not want to go to England, and would not go, neither did he want any money; it was all a mystery to him, and he could not understand why he had been written to about the matter. In the presence of Baker, I prepared the following personal, and signed it with his initials:

Should like to have a personal interview with you. W. T. B.

He was instructed at the same time to make a diligent search for Booth, and report to me if he succeeded in finding him. The publication of the above promptly brought the following response addressed to Baker:

I seen your notice to-day in *Star*. I won't come and see you. You are putting a job up on me. I won't write no more, so that ends it. You will find the boy where I say, and by the time you get this I will be in York [meaning New York, probably]. I got money and you can't catch me in no trap. Do as I say and you will succeed. Some detective has put you up to this. What I have said is true, so help me God.

You can't know any more if you see me, for I don't know. You want to see me only for to cop me. You will never see me again. So good-by bye. I didn't think you would try that game after I told all. I am the only one who knows where he is. NELSE B.

This note was also brought to me upon its receipt. On the following day, Baker told me that on his way home the evening before he was hailed by a man and

woman, both entire strangers to him. The man said, "You are Mr. Baker, formerly of South Carolina, I believe. A person wishes to see you at the West Philadelphia depot to-morrow morning at seven o'clock. Will you be there?" Baker replied that he would, and asked the name of the person. The stranger told him he would recognize the man at once, and refused to answer any questions. He said he sent for me to be there also, but I did not receive the message in time. Baker went at the hour named, and while looking for the person who had so mysteriously summoned him, his South Carolina acquaintance, Nelse Booth, alias Laurie, grasped his hand, saying, "I am the man who wants to see you, because you were my friend when I needed one; I determined to tell the CHARLEY ROSS affair to you, and to no one else." He reiterated what was said in his letters, and told Baker to turn the information to good account in a pecuniary way. While they were conversing the train moved off; the man jumped aboard, bade him good bye, saying he was going where it was useless to look for him. I now accused Baker of being in collusion with some one in an attempt to deceive me, which he positively denied. I required him to give me the address of his friends, and charged him not to change his residence without informing me, saying that I should hold him responsible until this matter was wholly cleared up. At this stage of the case I learned from a correspondent of a newspaper in another city that he had information of the matter, and ask him to suspend its publication for a few days. Although little confidence was placed in the story, yet it was thought best to request the au-

thorities in England to investigate the matter; and without further delay I informed the commissioner of police in London of the case, and asked him to have it examined.

After the publication by the newspapers of the correspondence Baker handed me the following letter which although post-marked and mailed in Philadelphia, October the 8th, is dated New York, October the 9th.

NEW YORK, October 9.—*Baker:* You are a dam fool, and Ross is crazy. Now you are in danger. I thought you had more sense. Se hear, you have almost lost your chance for getting the boy. What made you give it away. You must now do as I say, or I will go for you, sure. for God sake don't say anything to any one now, but work for me. I want you to find Gusto, and then I will ensure you the boy. if you go to Bradford, Eng., and make inquiries, you can find him easy. You must be quiet about it when you find him, which is very easy to do. I will have it fixt, for I will manage to get him a letter, and if I don't, you go as I say, and show him this. this winter he will be about there or York i know this, you must keep from Ross and everybody else. Here is the secret: Gusto Englis name is Sam Hurbet, and by this name you will find him, if he see this I think it will be all right, tell him this: the child Boston gave you in New York is Charley Ross," and then tell him who Charley Ross is, for he don't know. I ought to kill you, for you have been trying you best to nab me. do as i say. dam you, and stop you hunting for me. I want Ross to have his boy. you Leave next week, and you can succeed. take this with you, and don't show it to a living sole, but Gusto or Herbert. if you do, I will murder you. so Beware Baker. FROM YOU KNOW WHO.

In answer to which the following personal appeared in the *Ledger* of the 12th:

Boston. Send me an order on Herbert to deliver him to me. I will go. Signed, B.

This personal brought the following letter, inclosing the order for the boy, which was received on the 14th, postmarked Philadelphia:

Baker, I seen you notice yesterday. I ges all right. i will not rite any more, not one line, but I want Ross to have his boy, and you get the reward. give this other pape to Sam Herbet, or gusto. You may the help. I will hear all about it, When you get back. Nelse Booth. if he can't read, you read it to him, he will know all abot it.

The order addressed on an outside fold to "Sam Herbert," is as follows:

New York, America, October 13, 1875.—*Sam Hurbet:* Give to this man Baker my little boy, which I gave you to keep for me last October, in York State, America. I have sent him over for him. I have made up with the old woman, and we all going to live to gither. I have had a big stake, and I ges we can live all right. If I owe you anything send me word by Baker and I will fix it. You know who I mean. Little Charley Sprague, my son. Bake, is all ready to come to York State, so don't detain him. Oblige, Hiram Sprague, your old friend, Boston.

Efforts were now made to find out if there had been a man answering to the name of Gusto, who is represented to have been in South Carolina, and it was found that a gipsey band under the leadership of such a person had gone from Philadelphia to Savannah a few years ago, and that he was known in the neighborhood of George's Station; but we failed to trace him from that point. Inquiries were made and registers were searched in all the steamship offices in New York, Baltimore and Philadelphia, whose vessels sail to Savannah, but failed to discover that he came back by either of the lines. Having now not only a more limited area in which to look for the child, but also the name of the person to whom Booth claimed that he gave him, I again wrote to the Chief of Police in London as well as to the constabulary in all the ridings of Yorkshire, giving them all the information we possessed, and asked them if possible to trace the parties. How promptly, cheerfully and faithfully the

police of England worked in the case is best told by extracts from letters I have received, dated Chief Constable's Office, Leeds.

The Chief writes as follows:

25th October, 1875.

SIR:—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter inclosing photograph of your little boy who was stolen. In reply I have to state that instructions have been issued to have the most searching inquiries made in all quarters where a clue may possibly be obtained within the borough. If anything should be heard of him I will telegraph you, and should I be able to obtain any information about the man Gusto, I shall not fail to communicate with you at once.

Owing to the large area of the borough, it will take some little time to exhaust the inquiry; but no time will be lost.

Your most obedient servant,

H. HENDERSON, *Chief Constable.*

Christian K. Ross, Esq., Philadelphia, U. S. A.

And again, dated Chief Constable's Office:

WAKEFIELD, *October 25, 1875.*

DEAR SIR:—You were informed by my chief clerk that your letter of of the 29th ultimo has been duly forwarded by the Metropolitan Police. I have now to acknowledge the receipt of that of the 9th inst., which disposed of the difficulty as to the time when Gusto would, as stated by Booth, be travelling between Bradford and York. The most prompt steps have been taken for the recovery of the child, and I trust that if anywhere in Yorkshire, we may succeed in finding him. All the information furnished up to the present time has been collected and printed, and has been issued to the Police of this Riding as well as to the boroughs. The North and East Riding Police have also been furnished with copies, and photographs of the child follow by this night's post. If we should be successful, every care shall be taken of the child, and you shall be communicated with at once, etc., etc. I am, dear sir,

Yours faithfully,

DUNCAN MCNEILL, *Chief Constable.*

To C. K. Ross, Esq., Philadelphia, U. S. A.

Mr. McNeill writes again as follows:

WAKEFIELD, *October 26, 1875.*

DEAR SIR:—In reply to your letter of the 13th inst., received this

morning, I beg to inform you that the additional information given will be issued by this evening's post, and if Gusto *alias* Sam Herbert is in this county, I hope he may be found. It is difficult to understand why Booth should give the boy to Gusto in place of taking steps indirectly to secure the reward offered; but in any case if Booth's whereabouts cannot by any means, be discovered, the channel of communication through Baker should be kept up, and the latter should be stimulated by hope of a reward. I shall be obliged by your forwarding all information you can collect, no matter how trivial, and should be glad also if anything more precise can be discovered as to the habits and calling of Sam. Herbert, with a description of him, if possible, etc., etc. I am, dear sir.

Yours faithfully,

DUNCAN MCNEILL, *Chief Constable, West Riding.*

To C. K. Ross, Esq., Philadelphia, U. S. A

Again he writes:

CHIEF CONSTABLE'S OFFICE, WAKEFIELD, *October 31, 1875.*

DEAR SIR:—On the 28th inst. certain information was received from the Chief Constable of Leeds in reference to a child seen there on the 13th inst., and was issued to the Police of Riding and neighboring jurisdictions on the same night. As, however, the Chief Constable of Leeds mentioned having written to you, I think it right to tell you that the woman and children alluded to by him have been found, and it has been made clear after the most careful investigation that all the children are her own; nor do any of them answer the description given by you. At present I cannot hear anything of Gusto *alias* Herbert; but continued exertions shall be made with a view of discovering his whereabouts.

The likeness of your boy which has been circulated is evidently from a drawing or photograph; will you please inform me when the original was taken; will you also forward to me direct any information you may procure, as, by so doing, much time will be saved. I am, dear sir,

Yours faithfully,

DUNCAN MCNEILL, *Chief Constable.*

Christian K. Ross, Philadelphia.

To the above letter I replied as follows:

PHILADELPHIA, *November 16, 1875.*

DUNCAN MCNEILL, ESQ., CHIEF CONSTABLE, W. R. YORKSHIRE.—*Dear Sir:*—Your esteemed favor of the 31st ultimo is to hand. I enclose you a copy of the original photograph of my little boy from which the one I sent you some time ago was taken, after being magnified and

altered by an artist under instructions from Mrs. Ross. This was the only one we had; CHARLEY was two and a half years old at the time it was taken. He was four years and two months when he was taken from us, and now would be five years and four months old.

We did not consider the enlarged photograph perfect; his mouth should be a little more closed. In taking the small picture I now send you, his attention was attracted to some object, which caused him to be excited and open his mouth; and we did not have that part of his face altered for fear the artist should lose the general expression of the face. Of course we expect he would be changed somewhat in his appearance according to the treatment he has received since he was stolen; but still we think his general expression would remain. I have no further information to communicate, except that I fear this supposed clue will terminate, like so many others have, in a confidence game of some sort, as I wrote the Commissioner of Police in my first letter. As yet we have been unable to find out the object the parties had in view; and lest I should fail of the right thing, I feel it my duty to investigate everything that has any probability in it. Should I receive any further information, you may be assured I will at once communicate it to you.

Mrs. Ross has had a very kind letter from a lady (I think Mrs. Barclay) who resides in your neighborhood, and I think she said she was acquainted with you or had been to see you in reference to our little CHARLEY. Should you see her, please give her our warmest thanks. Thanking you for the interest you have manifested in our behalf,

I remain yours truly, CHRISTIAN K. ROSS.

Several other letters were received reporting that active efforts continued to be made to discover the objects of their search, and the final report is as follows:

CHIEF CONSTABBE'S OFFICE, WAKEFIELD, *February 9, 1876.*

DEAR SIR.—I had intended writing to you before, but had hoped I might have something to communicate. I much regret to say that our inquiries have so far been to no purpose; and notwithstanding the active coöperation given by the Police of the Northern counties, I have been unable to find any reliable clue. It is true that once or twice information reached me which I had hoped might be turned to good account; but on working out these cases and closely sifting the statements made, we found ourselves without any solid ground to carry us further. The publicity given in America and, indeed, possibly on this side also, has been the means of suggesting the names of Gusto and Herbert, which have been

repeated without any real intention to deceive; but I can find no good reason to suspect that the first-mentioned name has ever been heard here; and the second, tho' of course we find it occurring now and then, has no individual bearing that we can discover on the question at issue, as it is a name one would expect to find. I regret I cannot give a more hopeful report; but at the same time I beg you will remember that you may at all times depend upon the fullest assistance from this office and indeed the English Police generally; and if any further information however trivial is received, I shall be glad if you will inform me without delay. Mrs. Barclay does not reside in this neighborhood, but I know her as a most kind-hearted person, who has taken a deep interest in this case. Her sister Mrs. Leatham lives here, and has also been most anxious and kind. I return all your papers. We have all the information filed. Our officers will remain on the alert in case any clue should be obtained. I am, dear sir,

Yours faithfully,

DUNCAN MCNEILL,

Chief Constable, W. R. Yorkshire.

C. K. Ross, Esq., Philadelphia, U. S. A.

To the above letter the following reply was sent, dated

PHILADELPHIA, *February 23, 1876.*

DEAR SIR.—Your favor of the 9th inst. with enclosures reached me a few days ago.

I am very much obliged to you and the police generally of England who have taken so much interest in trying to serve me, and am well satisfied if the parties you have been looking after had been in your country you would have found some traces of them. I now believe, as I have for some time past, that there was a scheme of some kind to blackmail me; but the parties were afraid to go on with it on account of the publicity given to the matter. Many attempts of this kind have been made before, however without success.

I know of nothing just now that I can ask you to look after; but would thank you for the cheerfulness and promptitude with which you investigated this supposed clue.

The mystery connected with the continued absence of my little son still remains. I have no reliable information as to what has been done with him, whether he still lives or whether he is dead. The knowledge of the latter, if it is so, would be a relief to my wife and myself, as this protracted suspense is very wearing on us.

Again, accept my thanks for your devotion and interest in the cause of human suffering; and believe me ever

Yours truly,

CHRISTIAN K. ROSS.

Duncan McNeill, Esq., Chief Constable, W. R. Yorkshire, England.

One of the cases to which Mr. McNeill alludes in his last letter, which for a time bade fair to end favorably, was that the chief constable of the North Riding ascertained that two gipsy wagons, one reported to be marked "Herbert," and the other "Gusto," were at a village near Middlesborough, and the gipsies were said to have with them a child about the same age as our CHARLEY, who had a genteel appearance, and a complexion very different from that of any of his companions, and who had a striking resemblance to the missing child. Particular instructions were immediately issued to every station within the jurisdiction of the constable to be on the look-out. Very soon the party was found, the child in a wagon by itself, while the ostensible parents were selling their wares. Taking him to the station-house, he was examined by the Superintendent, who also compared the likeness of CHARLEY ROSS with him, and was satisfied that he was not my son. The man and woman with whom the child was found said he was their grandchild, and gave the place in which his father resided. The father was visited, and by his statement confirmed the authorities that it was a case of mistaken identity on the part of those reporting the matter. It was also found that the wagons had not been marked as represented.

The publication of this case in the newspapers of England and Scotland awakened anew the interest in

Great Britain, and many strangers wrote kind letters of inquiry and sympathy, showing the deep feeling still existing there for the recovery of the child, whenever an occasion calls it forth. A few extracts from letters received in the correspondence from South Carolina, which abound in expression of the liveliest interest and kindest feelings, cannot fail to be of interest. A gentleman in St. George's writes under date of October, 1875:

Though in doubt, I have a trembling hope that there may be something in this which may yet lead to the discovery of your little CHARLEY, and his restoration to your hearts and arms sound and well, and it would be a life-long satisfaction should I in any way be able to assist in bringing about such a happy termination to this great trouble—this crushing sorrow, etc.

Can I be of service to you in any way whatever in this matter? Do not hesitate to let me know either by mail or telegraph. In sincere sympathy, I am yours very truly, M. W. KENYON.

The same person writes again under date of November 6th:

Let me assure you, my dear sir, my interest in the recovery of your little CHARLEY is not of recent growth. There are thousands of hearts throughout our land in sympathy with you, and the joy which would be felt in your house could he be found, would send a thrill in sympathy through thousands of other households that you would never know.

Again he writes, January 6th, 1876:

Your letter of the 16th of November, came duly to hand. We sincerely thank you for the pictures enclosed of your two little boys. The bright, intelligent countenance of Walter is much admired, but for his great misfortune the picture of CHARLEY awakens a deeper and more tender interest. It is with no little regret that I am unable to add much to the information already given in regard to this Booth mystery. I would most willingly assist you in any way that I could, and can only deplore my inability. I would be glad to know your opinion now in regard to this matter, whether you still think it a heartless fabrication or otherwise, etc.

We never discovered with certainty the object of the parties who arranged this heartless scheme. That there was such a person as Nelse Laurie, alias Booth, was satisfactorily ascertained; but whether he wrote the letters I received was not certainly found out. His usual handwriting, a specimen of which we obtained, was pronounced by experts not to correspond with the writing of the letters addressed to me, and which Baker said were written by Booth. As to the man Gusto, alias Herbert, nothing more was learned of him, than that he went with his wagons, women and children, several years ago to Savannah, Georgia, on one of the steam vessels running from this port. The only conclusion we could arrive at was, that the whole thing was gotten up for the purpose of extortion, and whoever devised the plan had either not skill enough to carry it out, or became alarmed on account of the suspicions which were expressed after the second letter was received. It however occasioned much labor in telegraphing and corresponding, before we were satisfied that there was really nothing reliable in his story.

In no instance which we have investigated have so many reports of the same child come to us from different towns, as that of a child with a woman, who were first made known to us from Thomaston, Connecticut. In November, 1875, I received a letter, dated Thomaston, in which the writer says: "There is a woman traveling through the county with a child, evidently not her own. The woman is described to be of dark complexion, with dark hair and eyes; and the child is about five years old, with light complexion, full face, rosy cheeks, light hair, and very large dark eyes. Some-

times he is dressed in girl's, at other times in boy's clothing." The woman was said to tell different stories about herself and the child, and the writer suspected she had the stolen boy with her. A description and photograph of CHARLEY was sent on receipt of this letter, with a request that the writer would obtain a picture of the child, and send it to me. By return mail I received a second letter, saying that the woman and child had gone away, but would be followed. The next day I received the following telegram, dated Thomaston, Connecticut:

I have found the woman and child; no doubt your child. I shall require authority to arrest her. Signed. ———

The telegraph operator in Thomaston was requested to find the person who sent the above telegram, and bring him into the office in that place. After considerable delay he was found, but declined to give any further information, or to act in the matter himself, unless he had the proper authority. The following telegram was now sent to the operator:

Send for the Mayor, Chief of Police, or Sheriff, and invite them, or either of them, to the office. This matter is so important that we must have the woman and child detained until the matter is thoroughly investigated.

When the Sheriff came to the telegraph office, the operator was instructed to say to him that—

The Chief of Police of Philadelphia is in the office here, and says that this matter has an important look; that no harm can come of bringing the child to the office, and detaining the woman and child until an investigation is made. We can tell in a very few moments if there is anything in it, and if the woman is innocent she will cheerfully submit, and if guilty she must. The Chief wants to know how long it will take to bring the child to the telegraph office.

The Sheriff replied to the above, that he would go after them, and return in about two and half hours. On the return of the Sheriff he telegraphed:

The woman has gone with the boy; I do not think him the Ross boy; the majority of the people I have seen say the child's eyes are blue, some say grey; and the woman, I think, is honest. She told the same story in three different places at which I traced her. Have written full particulars.

CHATFIELD, Dep. Sheriff.

The Sheriff's letter, which came to hand the following day, gave a full and satisfactory account of his investigation, and we supposed the matter was ended. Not so, however; on the same day I received a telegram from Newtown, Connecticut, saying

I have the Thomaston woman and child. Answer quickly.

BRAY.

The question was asked of Mr. Bray, "What is the color of the child's eyes?" Answer: "Blue, or rather grayish." To which I replied: "Release the parties; not my CHARLEY;" and received the following reply:

Have released woman and boy; description answers to CHARLEY all but the eyes—these change in children. Woman acted suspiciously; ought to be investigated. Have written fully. BRAY

Mr. Bray wrote as follows:

While driving between the towns of Oxford and Southbury, I passed a woman tramp, who had a small boy; and on the following day, I met the same woman and child. The boy's face was covered up with a veil; as I passed them she gave the child a piece of apple, and as the veil was raised, I noticed the complexion of the boy was light, as was also his hair; while that of the woman was dark and swarthy. I found on arriving at Birmingham that telegrams regarding the Thomaston woman and boy had been passing, and concluded that the woman and child I had seen were the same persons; I immediately notified our Chief of Police, and we started and overtook them. The woman's answers to our questions are anything but straight. She said she was on her way to Danbury, Connecticut, to her friends, but had forgotten their names,

etc. She is certainly a very suspicious character, and so far as appearances go is not the mother of the child, which she claims to be. The boy is a bright little fellow, I should judge about five years old, and has eyes of a bluish gray, which might have been blue at one time. Had there been a photographer in the town, I would have had his picture taken and sent to you; but if you will write to the Mayor of Danbury, he will have one taken, and give all other information you desire, as the woman will probably remain in the vicinity of Danbury for a day or two. This is the Thomaston child, so that matter is settled.

Yours in sympathy, M. P. BRAY.

The people in all the villages through which the woman passed seemed now to be aroused, as letters came almost daily from different places, describing the parties. Although satisfied that the child was not CHARLEY, yet feeling a desire to have a picture of the boy about whom so much excitement had been raised, I wrote to an officer in Danbury to procure one for me, and received the following reply, dated

DANBURY, CONNECTICUT, *November 29, 1875.*

C. K. ROSS, ESQ.—*Dear Sir:*—Your letter came to hand last night; the woman and child are here. I have examined the parties pretty well, and took them to an artist and had their pictures taken, and enclosed you have one of each. Had I thought for a moment that the child was your *dear boy*, I would have spared no expense in taking them into custody. I am not positive that this is the same woman and child that were at Bethel and Newtown, but think they are. The boy is large for his age, and dressed in girl's clothes; he is smart and active; his eyes are decidedly blue. I attended to the matter at once, as I know just how much suspense you are in all the time when these stories reach you from all parts of the country. Anything I can do to assist you I will do with pleasure. Yours truly,

C. H. CROSBY, Policeman of Danbury.

The correspondence which ensued in this case was voluminous, and showed the intense interest the people took in endeavoring to restore our little boy. One instance only can be given. The following note was sent to Captain Heins, dated

STRATFORD, CONNECTICUT, *November 25, 1875.*

WM. R. HEINS, ESQ.—*Dear Sir*:—Have you a picture of CHARLEY ROSS, which you can spare? They seem to think he is about here.

Yours truly, L. H. RUSSELL.

I replied to Mr. Russell's note, sending him a photograph and asking him to let me know what information they had; and received the following answer, which is so expressive of kind feelings and sympathies, that I take pleasure in giving it publicity:

STRATFORD, CONNECTICUT, *November 29, 1875.*

CHRISTIAN K. ROSS, ESQ.—*Dear Sir*:—Yours covering photograph and description of little CHARLEY, also yours of 27th inst., are at hand.

We have some children in our family of whom we think something, and ever since the abduction of little CHARLEY our sympathies have gone out to you in the terrible bereavement; and you may rest assured that if there is anything we can do in our small way to aid you in the restoration of your little one it shall be most cheerfully done.

The woman who has been recently arrested in Newtown, and allowed to depart, is, undoubtedly, the same one who passed through here last summer with the little one, and who asked for something to eat at our house. The child played up and down on the piazza and seemed happy, and some little delicacies were given it, and it was noticed by my mother that it was kept veiled. She spoke of it after their departure, and wished we had a photograph of CHARLEY ROSS, so that we might know how he looked, in the event that he should be discovered about here. The woman does not live here, and I am under the impression she comes from some town on the coast further east. As she is itinerant in her habits, I don't know that I could put my hands on her just now, but I will make inquiry of persons whom I think would be apt to know, and report any developments.

This man Bray, who followed and arrested the woman, is not the man to let her go, if he thought he had the slightest reason to detain her; hence I think it doubtful if the child be the missing one. However, I will try to get a photograph of the child for you, and if it is within the range of possibilities will do it.

If at any time we can be of service to you, do not hesitate a moment to command us. Very truly yours, L. H. RUSSELL.

Again he writes, dated December 1st, 1875:

CHRISTIAN K. ROSS.—*Dear Sir*:—The woman and child are now at the New Haven Alms House. The warden says the child was born in Guilford, Connecticut; is about six years old. I can get a photograph of him if you wish. Awaiting your commands,

I am yours truly, L. H. RUSSELL.

The father of this child subsequently traced him to the alms-house in New Haven, and made application to get possession of him.

Another case which was brought to our notice, is of more than ordinary interest, because the child has been rescued from an irresponsible woman, and found a home with kind and good people who propose to nurture and train him up as their own child. In September, 1875, I received the following letter from Tennessee:

MR. C. K. ROSS, WASHINGTON LANE, GERMANTOWN, PA.—The import of my letter is one of sadness to us. We have heard or rather seen a circular in regard to a little lost boy, by name CHARLEY BREWSTER ROSS; and there is at the time of this writing with us a little boy answering the description exactly, except vaccination. This child was left at my yard gate a month ago by a suspicious-looking woman who professed to be his mother, but acted very unlike a mother. When questioned as to who she was or where she came from, she gave very unsatisfactory answers. Afterwards she walked off and left the child. I took him in my house and supplied the place of a mother the best I could. Although he has been with us so short a time, we are very much attached to him, and will, under no consideration, give him up unless he can be identified by his parents. The reward has induced many to search for your child; but the reward did not prompt me to take this child, for at that time I had not heard of the long-lost CHARLEY ROSS. Yesterday I saw the picture and circular of your child in the hands of the sheriff of our county. Had I known of the loss of your child I would have written you immediately. This child has accompanied me everywhere I went since he has been with me; and I am ready to make further explanations when I hear from you. Being in very needy circumstances, I cannot telegraph to you or send a picture; but should you desire a picture, if you will forward the money I will

send a full-sized photograph as soon as one can be taken. To speak truthfully, I do not want to give the child up; but if he proves to be the lost CHARLEY, I would be glad to see him restored to his grief-stricken parents. I am poor, and of course the money would alleviate my circumstances very much; but money could not take him if he is not the lost child. As I deem this sufficient at this time, I will close.

Yours truly, MRS. ———.

To this letter I replied, asking for further information, and that a picture be sent me as soon as it could be taken. The next letter I received was as follows, dated Tennessee, October, 1875:

MR. C. K. ROSS.—*Dear Sir*:—In reply to your letter of the 8th inst. I would say that I had started to have a photograph taken when your letter reached me. But the sheriff has taken the advantage of me, and doubtless forwarded you a picture with a letter and probably a newspaper publication, which I am and was opposed to his doing. It was my intention when I wrote to you to fully investigate the matter, and if the child in my hands was yours, to restore him to the aggrieved parents. It was not money that induced me to write; but the excitement which has been raised from the report that our little boy John Wilkins, as we call him, is CHARLEY ROSS, has grown to a considerable pitch, so much so that I am almost afraid some one will attempt to take him from me. But the man who comes to take him by force must be doubly protected, for the child is very near and dear to me. No one but the parent can get him; the public is excited on the subject. That he is CHARLEY ROSS I am not, in the least, inclined to believe. I had the picture taken; the woman who left the child is an American, tolerably good-looking and seemingly tolerably well-bred; has hazel eyes and black hair, and says she lived in an adjoining county. She says her name is Susan. As to her whereabouts I know not. She came here on the 2d of this month, and said she heard the child had been taken from me; but she left me as much in the dark as ever, not telling me where she lived or giving her name. I give this much information lest your hopes may be excited only to be blighted, for I do not think our little boy is your long-lost, much-loved CHARLEY; although there may be some resemblance, I am not at all inclined to think so, although many will have it that way; that is too often the case when we really wish to believe it. It is easy to persuade oneself to believe anything. This child is certainly a very bright boy; he does not talk plainly; has dark

eyes and flaxen hair, and may prove to be your CHARLEY; but I will not believe it until it is proven. I am the one interested, and wish to keep him, and would rather not have so much excitement if it could be avoided. Enclosed you will find a picture of little John Wilkins.

With my best wishes to you and with the hope that you may find your treasure, I close. Yours most respectfully, MRS. ———.

On receipt of the picture I wrote the lady that the child was a bright-looking little fellow, but not our CHARLEY; but I was glad to know he was now in charge of those who were interested in him and whose purposes were to take good care of him; and received the following reply to my letter:

TENNESSEE, *November 13, 1874.*

MR. C. K. ROSS.—*Dear Sir:*—I hasten to reply to yours of 27th ult., and readily give my consent that you can keep the picture I sent you. I am glad that you wish to keep it; my sympathy is so great for this little waif, I think every one else ought to feel as I do. You speak of his being a very bright little fellow; he certainly is an extraordinary child, having the best disposition of any child I ever saw. He has no doubt been trained and nurtured by doating parents. It is not possible the woman who left him with me taught him what he knows; he can tell three letters of the alphabet, says he learned them on plank fences. He says he has seen steam cars, but does not know how far from here; says he slept in the woods. He has a beautiful skin and hair, very sweet manners and neat habits; and, really, I think him a little jewel. I am determined to do the best I can for him; my only fear is that I may not be able to educate him as well as I could wish, but no opportunity will be neglected so long as I live. If ever your little loved CHARLEY is restored, show him the picture and tell him that it is the picture of a poor little boy who had neither home nor friends. I would be exceedingly glad to hear from you if your little CHARLEY is restored to you, for no one would rejoice more with you than myself. Thanks for the compliment in regard to the kindness extended to the poor little waif committed by chance to my care.

I close by saying that I am too glad to be able to keep little John Wilkins with me, but sorry I could not relieve the long-burthened hearts of little CHARLEY'S parents.

I am yours respectfully, MRS. ———

The excitement in the neighborhood where this child was discovered was very great; persons went many miles to see him, when it became known that he was supposed to be the missing child, thus showing the interest which is felt for the recovery of the kidnapped child in that far distant State.

The case of a child found in the Province of Nova Scotia, British Possessions, claimed to be CHARLEY ROSS, will now be given. Early in March, 1875, I received the following letter, dated

AYLESFORD, NOVA SCOTIA, *February 27th, 1875.*

MR. ROSS.—*My Dear Sir:*—With regard to your lost child, there is a small boy in this county with a woman who pretends to tell fortunes. The child is about four and a half years old, very bright, and says his name is CHARLEY ROSS. They came from the United States in August or first of last September. I have every reason to believe that the child is your son. Now can you give me any information about the boy, and give me authority, and I will find out all about him, and advise you as soon as I hear from you. I have the honor to be your friend

DAVID CORBIN.

To this letter I replied, and sent the writer a full description of CHARLEY, with a photograph, and asked him to note very particularly the color of the child's eyes. I also gave him a number of questions to ask the child, with a request that as soon as he was able he should write me everything connected with the case that he found out. His next letter is dated—

AYLESFORD, NOVA SCOTIA, *March 12, 1875.*

MR. C. K. ROSS.—*Dear Sir:*—Since I last wrote you about the boy CHARLEY ROSS, I called personally and made an investigation, and the following is a correct statement of what I learned

The boy is perfect in every respect, of a medium height, has well-formed eyes, color between hazel and blue, hair somewhat dark. The woman who has him says that his hair became darker since last summer, and his eyes lighter. The child has a full, round fat face,

short chin with a noticeable dimple, a plump dimpled hand and a slight cowlick on the left side of his forehead, with the hair pointing upward, and inclined towards the left ear, and does not resemble the likeness you sent me in some respects. The people who have the child came here from the United States, first stopping in New Brunswick. I have been secretly watching their movements for three months, and the supposed mother intends bringing the child to my house for a fortnight, and will then look for the mark on his arm. I clipped a little lock of his hair, which is inclosed.

I will spare no pains, and with the blessing of God will do all I can, and forward information and particulars as fast as I can obtain them.

Yours very truly, DAVID CORBIN.

Again on the 23d of March he writes:

MR. C. K. ROSS.—*Dear Sir*:—Your letter of 17th inst. just received. The boy was brought to my house yesterday. I had a photographer on hand and got a poor picture of the child, which I inclose to you. I will get a better picture in a day or two. The boy is smart, talks plainly, has a small neck and very light eyebrows. He tells my children that CHARLEY ROSS's father is coming after him in the spring. I will take advantage of every opportunity to find out all I can by Saturday's mail, and will then send you another likeness. I have to act quietly, but know how to do it. Please let me know your impressions after receiving this.

I forgot to mention that when the child was first brought to Nova Scotia his hair was long and curly, and much lighter in color than at present. Yours truly, DAVID CORBIN.

To this letter I replied that the child at Aylesford was not my little boy, as the picture which I received did not bear the slightest resemblance to him; but before my letter reached Mr. Corbin, he wrote again as follows, dated

March 31, 1875.

MR. C. K. ROSS.—*Dear Sir*:—I have no doubt of this child being yours; the woman who has him told me there is a great sum of money on his head, and she or some one else will get it before long; but she says it is only the boy's face that will get it. I have him here with me, and when I talk to him about home he puts his arm over his face and

will not answer. I asked him if he would like to see his father; he said he would. He told my daughter he had cousins whose names were Joe, George and Frank, but would not tell the names of any of his brothers. I have traced these people back as far as Portland, Maine, thence to Eastport, St. John's, New Brunswick. I am fearful lest the boy may be taken away, and should like to know your decision ere long.

Yours truly, DAVID CORBIN.

P. S.—The child is drilled so as to forget all about home. I do wish you could see him face to face. D. C.

On receiving my letter in which I state our decision that the child is not our CHARLEY, Mr. Corbin writes as follows:

AYLESFORD, NOVA SCOTIA, *April 7th, 1875.*

MR. C. K. ROSS.—*Dear Sir:*—I received yours of a late date, in which you say that the child's eyes are too light for your son, etc. Every day throws more light on the subject, and the more the boy is with me the stronger is my belief that he is your boy. I have called in a physician, and he says that if there ever was a CHARLEY ROSS stolen, that this child is he; he says, if a child should be taken from a city, and let run at large in the country for nine months, his own mother would not know him; and with regard to the color of the eyes, that don't amount to anything, for he has known children's eyes to change from a dark hazel to a light blue inside of one year. He furthermore says that the photograph you sent me is an exact likeness of the boy when he stands with his mouth a little open; but a full face view it does not look so much like him. The woman who has the child is becoming uneasy, and talks of going back to the States in May, and says she will get a large sum of money then. I heard her say to the boy, when alone with him, that she would leave him, "and then Ross can get you, I've had you long enough." If this don't prove to be your boy I will not charge you one cent, only good will. I have the honor to be yours truly,

DAVID CORBIN.

Before the above letter reached me the second photograph was sent me through the Pinkerton agency, who had also heard of this child. After submitting it to my family for inspection, I wrote Mr. Corbin conclusively that we all decided the child was not our missing

boy, and supposed the matter was ended; but subsequently the mayor received a letter repeating what had been written me, and insisting that some one should be be sent to Aylesford who would know CHARLEY ROSS, as the writer was fully satisfied that he had possession of him.

The child certainly was not ours, and had evidently been schooled by the woman who had charge of him to call himself CHARLEY ROSS, and to answer a few questions correctly, learned from circulars, with the expectation of getting something from the persons who might become interested in him.

Although popular excitement in the case has very very much subsided, because of the length of time which has elapsed since the abduction, yet scarcely a week passes without our receiving reports of children in different sections of the country who are supposed to be our missing boy, and which require investigation. A very recent case was brought to our notice, which, from the far-distant territory in which the child was found, and the persistent efforts of the gentlemen who followed the woman having him in charge, deserve more than a passing notice.

On the 8th of April, 1876, I received the following telegram, dated

McALLISTER, INDIAN TERRITORY.

What is the full amount of reward offered for CHARLEY? Answer.
Signed, ——— ———.

On inquiry at the office of the Western Union Telegraph Company I learned that McAllister was a village of the Choctaw Nation, Indian Territory, about twenty-five hundred miles distant from this city; yet the man-

ager kindly made up a circuit and put me in direct communication with the place. My answer to the telegram was "Five thousand dollars." They replied, "We think we have CHARLEY here; come quickly. Answer." This dispatch was received late Saturday night. The next day, Sunday, a conversation was held, which resulted in learning that the child had dark blue eyes, answered the description of CHARLEY ROSS in every respect, called himself CHARLEY ROSS, although he had another name; he had been used very hard, having travelled three hundred miles on the same horse with the woman who had charge of him. I replied that if they were sure his eyes were blue, he was not my child, and requested them to send me a picture of him. The next day I received a telegram, saying that his eyes were dark gray. I now requested that a woman who could distinguish colors be called into the office, to look at his eyes. She decided they were brown gray, or dark gray. Being as uncertain now as before, I asked the child several simple questions, to none of which did he give correct answers. I then received a message saying that there was no artist in the place to take a picture, and telegraphed back that I did not think he was CHARLEY, and did not feel warranted in taking so long a trip without more definite information. They stated that the woman and child were under arrest, and would be held until a letter reached me, to which I should reply by telegraph. The letter is as follows:

MCALLISTER, CHOCTAW NATION, I. T., *April 8, 1876.*

MR. C. K. ROSS.—*Dear Sir:*—We have now in charge a very shrewd woman who has been travelling from place to place, and has with her a boy, apparently five years old. Sometimes he is dressed as a boy, at

other times as a girl. We have seen your description of CHARLEY, and feel very confident we have him. We thought there was a large reward offered, and have put ourselves to great trouble to secure him and his keeper. There is a man in company who has lately joined them. CHARLEY has the cowlick and the vaccinnation mark on his arm. He was asked this morning what was his name? He said, Hiram. "What other name have you?" He replied "CHARLEY ROSS." We are here in a strange place, and have the woman and man both to guard. If you wish to satisfy yourself, come quickly; come prepared to fix all up, as we are very confident we have him here.

We are yours truly,

Signed, ——— ———

Expecting a letter of a later date I did not reply to the above, and the next day received the following, dated McAllister, I. T.:

April 10, 1876.

MR. C. K. ROSS.—*Dear Sir:*—After the conversation through the wires we have just had with you, I now write more minutely. My comrade wrote last Saturday. I brought the little boy here to-day to have his likeness; but there is no artist here. I will say to you I verily believe the child we have is CHARLEY ROSS. A woman came to my native town in Texas, 1st of January last, and pretended to be hunting a school; but failing in that she went about twelve miles west, where I saw this boy. He had long, flaxen curly hair, which hung nearly to his shoulders in ringlets.

About a month ago a picture of CHARLEY came into my possession, and in an instant I recognized the resemblance. I also sent the picture to a very intelligent lady who had seen the child here, and she also remarked it was the likeness of the child here, without any person calling her attention to it. The woman with whom the boy is, is very bad, although intelligent. She claims to have $3,000 in a bank in Louisiana. About three weeks ago she shot a man in the head, was arrested, but escaped. We have pursued her hundreds of miles on horseback, and are pretty well worn out, as you may judge, and have spent considerable money. We have frequently seen that there was $20,000 or more reward offered for the child.

I verily believe if you allow this opportunity to recover your son to pass, you will never have another of getting him.

When I asked his name he said CHARLEY ROSS; and I well know

the name of Ross had not been mentioned to him. His recollection of two years ago is very faint, and he has had rough treatment. He was carried by the woman 250 miles on horseback, in cold bad weather, camping out with nothing but the saddle blankets of the horse to cover them. We know not what to do. Are a great distance from home and have no money to spend without a fair prospect of its being returned. True it is in expectation of a large reward that we undertook the journey.

Some persons say the child's eyes are hazel, others dark gray; but we think the color of the eyes does not make any difference. Every person says he is *the* CHARLEY ROSS. I expect we shall start for home in the morning. My address is Texas. If you come on, come to Texas to my address. Signed, ——— ———.

To this letter I replied as follows, dated Philadelphia, April 15, 1876:

MESSRS. ———.—*Gentlemen:*—Your favor of the 8th inst. is to hand, and also the letter of a few days earlier date.

In reply I would say I am sorry you have been unable to get a picture of the child you suppose to be my little son. You will understand why I am so skeptical about any stranger being able from a woodcut to identify the child, when I tell you that I have already in different ways traced up about three hundred children, and in most of these cases persons who reported them were well assured they were right; but of course they were mistaken.

I am satisfied that my little boy's eyes are a decided brown, as are the eyes of all my children, and as they grow older they become darker in color. And oculists, of whom I have inquired, say there is no way by which the iris can be changed in color.

Again, I cannot see what connection there could possibly be between this woman and the people who actually stole my little boy. We know these persons were killed December 14, 1874; and how a woman who you say has been wandering about the Southern country should have had any acquaintance with a couple of river thieves who belonged to New York I cannot see, yet it might be—but it is almost impossible.

It is not an unusual thing for children to call themselves CHARLEY ROSS. I have a number of instances of the kind, and have found several children who answered some questions correctly, which seemed almost incredible: yet they were not mine.

I confess I do not feel warranted in incurring the expense of going South to look after this child without more definite information.

My means have been exhausted long since; everything has been fully investigated; but if I felt that there was a possible chance that he was my little boy I should make any sacrifice to see him. I inclose a circular with photograph, and thanking you for the interest you have taken in the matter, I am respectfully yours,

CHRISTIAN K. ROSS.

On the 13th of April the following letter was written at

STONEWALL, CHICKASAW NATION.

MR. C. K. ROSS.—*Sir:*—We have just arrived here, eighty miles from McAllister, on our way to Sherman. We are going there to be in more direct communication with you. We are now thoroughly convinced we have CHARLEY BREWSTER ROSS. While on our way here the woman has told us the whole story. She says the child is not hers; but he was placed in her hands about one year ago, with the understanding that the three men who gave her the child would place in a bank in Louisiana $3,000, subject to her order; there was present at the time the bargain was made three other persons (names given); that this boy is CHARLEY ROSS. We will send you a picture of both the woman and child as soon as we can get them taken in Sherman. But we are satisfied that nothing more than a general outline of him will resemble CHARLEY, for the reason that he has been greatly exposed in sun, rain and wind, having made a long trip, until we found him bareheaded and barefooted. His face is scarred—the woman says he fell on hot ashes; and his hair cut very badly. His face looks as though it had not been washed for a week. We are taking all the care of him we possibly can in this savage country. We do think the facts already given you justify your coming at once to Sherman to see this boy, and bring your wife with you; for we think you may have difficulty in recognizing your own child. We know if you was as well satisfied as we are that this is CHARLEY, you would not delay a moment in coming. It will only cost you one or two hundred dollars and six or seven days time to come to Sherman, and we have spent over that largely, besides being subject to many privations, dangers, hunger, etc., to say nothing of the horses we have rode down. We are now feeding for the first time in thirty-six hours, having travelled that long time without seeing a house. We were afraid to travel on the railroad for fear of a mob. If you write, post to Sherman, Texas, where we will remain until this thing is terminated. But

we do hope you will not delay one moment in coming. Hoping to hear from you soon, we are very respectfully,

Yours, ——— ———.

In this letter the writer refers to two members of Congress from Texas, and a merchant in Sherman, Texas. On the 25th of April, I received another letter enclosing the pictures of both the woman and child, and telegraphed immediately to Sherman that the boy was not my CHARLEY. The picture of this child who was followed for so long a distance, and who evidently was in charge of a woman not his mother or proper guardian, and about whom such strong assertions were made that he was my little boy, is here given. I also wrote to the gentlemen on the 25th of April as follows:

GENTLEMEN.—I telegraphed you to-day that the child you have so persistently followed, and whose picture I received, is not my little boy. I also received your favor of April 13th, and delayed writing until the photograph came to hand. I have already found so many persons mistaken in identity that I am ready to believe there is scarcely one chance out of a thousand that any stranger would be able from a picture to identify the child; and were I to undertake to go or send to examine one-fourth of the children who are reported to me in bad hands or astray, I should require a strong bank upon which to draw for funds, and then would be kept on the go all the time. I am therefore compelled to try first to get all the facts I can, and then decide what is best to be done. To-day I have a child reported in Kansas as mine *certainly*, and a few days ago another one in Texas; a day or two ago one in New York, and a short time since one in Germany; thus you can see the great difficulty I would have to respond in person to all.

I trust that some one will yet be right, and thus end this long and harrowing suspense. With many thanks,

I am yours truly, CHRISTIAN K. ROSS.

I will here relate a pleasant incident showing the tact used by two ladies, (who thought they had CHARLEY,) to find out whether their suspicions were right. Last spring a man with a child, professing to be from New

York, arrived in this city and stopped at a private boarding-house. After remaining a few days, he said he was called unexpectedly to New York, and asked the privilege of leaving his little boy until he returned, which would be within two days. Not coming back at the specified time, the persons in the house suspected he had left the child with the intention of abandoning him, and thought he resembled the pictures which they had seen of CHARLEY ROSS. The circumstance was reported to me, and a member of the family went to see the child, who decided that he was not our little boy. The child remained with the family about a month, and was then placed in one of the homes for friendless children, the matron being informed at the time that he was not our little boy. After he had been in the Home a short time two ladies visiting the institution, observing a striking likeness to CHARLEY'S photograph, became impressed with the idea that we might have been mistaken in his identity, and without saying where they intended going, obtained permission to take the child out of the institution for a few hours. Taking him to my residence they turned him loose on the lawn, keeping themselves concealed outside the place in such a position as to observe the child's movements.

The little fellow, as though familiar with the place, went directly on the porch, mounted the velocipede, and went whirling around with all the rapidity he could give it. Very soon Walter, who was near by, saw the boy, and always ready for a good time, joined the strange child, and very soon they were as familiar as though they had known each other all their lives. The ladies who were watching all these actions were highly de-

CHILD FOUND IN THE CHOCTAW NATION.

lighted, and began to think and feel that by their tact they had surely discovered the real CHARLEY ROSS. My wife hearing the voices of children on the lawn, and knowing Walter had been alone, looked out of the nursery window to see who was with him, and at a glance saw the child about the size of CHARLEY, with light hair, curled as his used to be. The impression flashed across her mind that he was her own dear little boy, and for the moment she was completely unnerved, and seemed rooted to the spot on which she stood, without power to move a single muscle; but on looking at him again she discovered her mistake, and with trembling steps went to the children, and asked Walter whose little boy was with him. He said he didn't know, he came to him and wanted to play, and they were having a nice time.

The ladies who had brought the child now appeared, and said they adopted the plan of letting the child go on the lawn to see if by his actions he would show any knowledge of the place; and they confessed they were greatly encouraged to believe they had brought home our long missing little boy, after seeing the seeming familiarity of the child with everything he saw, and the readiness with which Walter joined in his play. They said he went up on the lawn at once, found the velocipede on the porch, and without hesitation began to make it go until Walter came to him, and without any restraint they both played with different things until spoken to by Walter's mother. The ladies took the child away, after being told that he was not our CHARLEY; feeling satisfied, however, with the effort they had made to restore a darling child to the embrace of his mother.

Many other cases of interest have occurred during

this protracted search for our little boy, of which detailed accounts cannot be given without encroaching too much on the prescribed limits of this volume. Enough have already been given to show the interest which has been awakened to restore the child, and which has not been confined to the boundaries of our country.

The number of children reported to us who have been traced, and of whom we have a record, reaches nearly three hundred. Many others have been looked up, both here and in New York, of whom no record was made. This number does not include the cases the Pinkerton agency investigated, of which I have no account. As a matter of interest, I give the States and countries where children have been looked after, with the number in each:

Pennsylvania	49	Colorado	2
New York	42	Wisconsin	2
New Jersey	28	Vermont	2
Illinois	15	Oregon	2
Michigan	12	California	5
Massachusetts	12	Delaware	2
Ohio	11	Minnesota	2
Indiana	10	Texas	2
Iowa	10	Georgia	1
Connecticut	7	North Carolina	1
Missouri	7	Maine	1
Maryland	6	Florida	1
Tennessee	6	Louisiana	1
West Virginia	4	Indian Territory	1
Virginia	3	Nova Scotia	1
New Hampshire	3	Cuba	1
Kansas	3	Canada	10
Kentucky	3	Scotland	1
District of Columbia	3	Germany	1

It will be seen by this list what a vast extent of territory it has been necessary to cover by investigations, whenever a child has been reported who was thought to be CHARLEY ROSS; and as may be imagined from the letters which have been given in the few cases that are mentioned in detail, the correspondence has been very great; in almost every case many letters were received and answered before a final conclusion could be reached. After all the means afforded by the telegraph and correspondence failed to satisfy us, a member of the family, often accompanied by a police officer, went to examine into cases, so as to leave nothing in doubt when it was possible to be certain.

Our general plan of investigating the case of any child who is reported to us, is to find out as nearly as we can his age, the color of his eyes, the circumstances in which he may be found, and to ask the child himself, if we can reach him by telegraph, a few questions about things connected with the home of CHARLEY, which we think he will never forget. If there remains any doubt after these questions have been asked, we then try to get a picture of the child, or send personally to see him. The question has frequently been asked, whether out of the large number of children which have been looked up during this search we have found any who have been really kidnapped? We have not found any who have been taken and held for a ransom, and but two instances in which children have been stolen. Of these one was the boy mentioned in a previous chapter, as taken from his home by two strolling vagabonds, and trained to be a beggar, and restored from Chester, Illinois, to his parents; the other child was a son of Professor

Leib, of St. Paul, Minnesota, who was stolen about four years ago, but for what object never was ascertained, as nothing has ever been heard of him since he was taken away.

The children we have traced, and whose history we could find out, have been those who have been abandoned by their parents. Sometimes the father, at other times the mother, would leave a child at a place or house, either to board or to be temporarily cared for, and never return for him. Many children scattered over the country, who have been taken out of different charitable institutions in the cities, have been reported to us in our searches; sometimes by the persons themselves, who have come into possession of them, at other times by their neighbors, who could not account for a strange child being brought among them, and not stopping to inquire into the matter, concluded that he might be the missing boy. Children of a fair complexion found with gipsies and other wandering people we are sure to hear of. Illegitimate children who have been secreted naturally cause conjecture; and in other cases, where there has been disagreement between parents, either one of whom taking away a little boy into a strange town, the efforts made to conceal the child so as to prevent the other parent finding him, would awaken the suspicion of some one who would report it to us. Only one case has come under our notice of a child having been taken through personal revenge, and we have had two instances in which children have been put on railroad cars by inhuman persons to be cared for by conductors of the trains. We have also had a few instances reported by managers of charitable institutions,

when they have thought a child placed in the institution bore a resemblance to the pictures of CHARLEY, and they could not get a satisfactory account of the child's parentage. Children of all sizes, and of ages between two years and twelve years, have been brought to our notice. It will be perceived by the number of States and countries from which children have been reported, either as astray or in the possession of persons who rested under suspicion, how widely our loss has been advertised, and how anxiously kind-hearted people have hoped that in the face of a neglected child they had seen, might be traced the features of little CHARLEY ROSS.

May God bless all such, and may they never need our sympathy for themselves in a like trial.

CHAPTER XIII.

TRIAL OF WESTERVELT. THEORIES, AND CONCLUSION OF NARRATIVE.

TO enable the reader of this narrative more thoroughly to understand the case of the abduction of my son, a sketch of the career of Mosher and Douglas, with some notice of their crimes and characteristics, and of their peculiar kind of work, is necessary. The first of these men combined the genius of a skilled mechanic with the qualities of a daring burglar. He was possessed of rare ability and prudence in originating and marking out his schemes, and was not wanting in consummate boldness in their execution. Born in Connecticut, in early manhood he removed to New York, where for a time he pursued the occupation of a ship carpenter. Soon, however, he drifted into lawlessness and crime, and adopted the profession of a river thief.

He drew around him a desperate band of shore pirates well known in the annals of crime in New York, and soon became their leader. In 1857, he was arrested and charged with a daring robbery on the East river, but was discharged because the captain of the vessel was so seriously injured by one of the robbers as to be unable to identify any of them. At another time he was tried and found guilty of a robbery, and imprisoned in Sing Sing, but was released before the expiration of his sentence.

As Mosher grew older, he gradually abandoned the dangerous practice of robbing vessels along the river, and adopted a less hazardous branch of crime, and became a burglar as well as a thief. For years he successfully broke into houses along the water courses, which he approached by means of a small boat.

After this manner he committed many depredations on the shores of Long Island and New Jersey, loading his booty into his little craft, and sailing direct for the city of New York, where the stolen property was placed beyond the reach of recovery. If pursued, he would run into some one of the many places of concealment, all well known to him, hide the goods, and await an opportunity to carry them off in safety. A few years ago he was joined in his nefarious business by a young man named Joseph Douglas, who, although much younger, proved to be a suitable companion in his predatory excursions. Between these two men there grew a close intimacy, and they seem to have been partners in all their subsequent crimes.

It was during one of these piratical expeditions about four years ago, they robbed a country store in Red Bank, New Jersey, for which Mosher was arrested, and under the name of Johnson sent to Monmouth county jail, in Freehold, to await trial. Thence he soon made his escape so successfully that all trace of him was lost by the authorities. At this time he came to Philadelphia, and assuming the names of Henderson and Hendricks, was soon joined by Douglas, who, taking the name of Clark, lived with him until the kidnapping of CHARLEY. While in this city they followed nominally the business of peddling, and traveled with a horse and

wagon through the surrounding country selling small articles, often extending these trips into the State of Delaware and as far south as Baltimore.

While they remained in this city no criminal charges were ever brought against either of them, nor were they known to our police as criminals. Whatever depredations they committed were done away from the city and the stolen property brought here to be disposed of.

This short review of the career of these bad men is enough to show that for long years they were familiar with crime, and were prepared to engage in anything that promised a large reward. Finding nothing that promised that result more surely than the kidnapping of a little child and holding him for the payment of a large ransom, they became pioneers in a most atrocious crime, and which was hitherto unknown in this country.

The plan adopted by the abductors of CHARLEY showed a determined purpose from the outset to prove to every one, that whenever in the future they stole a child they would never give him up without a large ransom, which should be paid them in a manner entirely safe to themselves. This policy obliged them to adopt measures of more than ordinary caution for their own protection, while at the same time they were required to provide means by which they would secure the money. Thus by rigidly holding the life of the child as the price of their own security, as well as for the payment of the money, they demonstrated that they would settle such affairs in their own way and on their own terms. This was done in my case, not only to intimidate, but also to show to other parents of children that might afterwards be stolen the necessity of being

prompt to make speedy settlement on any terms dictated by the thieves, and at the same time to keep them in a condition of terror until a settlement should be made.

This inexorable policy, as set forth by the writer of the letters, shows how essential it was that but few persons should be taken into the plot, and how necessary that those few should be bound to each other by the strongest ties and inducements. Hence in one of the letters it is said: "*We are sworn and blood-bound unto death to never give each other away.*" The necessity of the case in the judgment of Mosher required such exceeding secrecy that he, the chief conspirator in the abduction, by whom the plot was conceived and under whose direction it was being worked out, permitted himself to have but few confidants. He had long been guilty of crime, and had learned by experience that it would be fatal to that secrecy exacted in a case involving so great a risk, to confide in more than were positively needed to assist in carrying out his plans.

It was supposed when Mosher and Douglas were first suspected of being the kidnappers, that they had accomplices; in fact in one of the letters it is stated, "There are four of us." So that after they were killed, it became necessary to change the plan of the search for the child, which, while they lived, consisted chiefly in efforts to secure the men themselves, and thus reach the place in which they had concealed the child. After their death persons with whom they were intimate were looked up, in the expectation that possibly through them information might be obtained which would clear up the mystery. As stated in a previous chapter, among the first of these persons examined was William Wes-

tervelt, brother of Mosher's wife. This Westervelt was known to be an associate of both the thieves, and early in August, 1874, was suspected of being concerned in the abduction. The New York authorities failing, after a search of about two weeks, to find the suspected criminals, engaged Westervelt to aid in accomplishing their arrest; but after their death it was very strongly suspected that while professing to help the police he was really protecting the kidnappers, and by his duplicity enabling them to keep out of the way of the detectives. The statements extracted from him, together with the testimony of others who knew he was in communication with Mosher and Douglas while in the employ of the police authorities, satisfied District Attorney Furman Sheppard, of this city, that there was good cause for an indictment against him; and a true bill having been found, he was tried in September, 1875, for abducting, detaining and concealing CHARLES BREWSTER ROSS, for the purpose of extorting money from his parents, and for conspiring to commit these acts. The bill of indictment contained five counts, the first two of which covered the abduction and concealment of the child, and the last three the element of conspiracy to abduct, conceal, and to extort money by threatening letters.

The prisoner was defended by two attorneys, and the case for the Commonwealth was conducted by Furman Sheppard, the District Attorney, aided by Mr. Henry S. Hagert, his assistant.

Mr. Hagert, in his opening address to the court, referred to the crime in the following language: "In July, 1874, the citizens of Philadelphia were startled at the intelligence that an atrocious crime had been com-

mitted in their midst, one which to the criminal annals of the city prior to that time had been unknown. The intelligence of that crime spread far and wide over the country. In the far west, in the east, in the north, and south; in large cities, in small hamlets, by the wayside, this story was talked of, and carried with it sympathy and regret. The community was aroused, and every man and woman became, as it were, detectives. I need not say that that crime was the abduction of CHARLES BREWSTER ROSS." After adverting to the fact of the abduction, and to the testimony by which it was expected to connect the prisoner with the crime, he closed his remarks as follows: "There were more than Mosher and Douglas involved in this business; there were men who took care of the boy, who moved him from place to place, who, when messages were sent telling them of approaching danger, changed the quarters and location of the boy. You will understand there were a number of things to be considered in the abducting of the boy. He had to be hid, and kept out of the reach of the police force. You will understand how great was the search for this boy, how all the police force of the country was interested in his recovery; how every one supposed to have any connection with this case was arrested and examined. You will understand that at this time, when the interest was at its highest, that man in the dock was standing by, who could put his hand on the very men who did the deed, having them in his own house, and informing them of the actions of the police and of the intentions of the authorities. If we can show you that these facts as stated are so, there can be no doubt he is just as guilty

as if he had taken the boy himself, just as guilty as if he had conceived the plan of kidnapping."

The abduction being proven, as well as the circumstances connected with the early search for the kidnappers and the child, witnesses were examined to prove that Mosher and Douglas were the actual abductors, and to show how Westervelt was connected with them as an accomplice. The main facts brought out during the trial, so far as Westervelt was concerned with the case, are as follows:

In January, 1874, Westervelt with his family removed from New York to this city, and lived with Mosher for three months in the same house, returning to New York in April.

On the 23d of June, one week before the abduction, he made Mosher a visit, and went with him to a stable in the lower part of the city, to look at the horse and buggy, used afterwards in conveying the children away. During this visit, on the 25th of June, Mosher wrote the letter addressed to Mrs. Murdock at Rondout, dating it New York, June 26th, and entrusted it to Westervelt to carry to New York, where he posted it on his arrival in that city.

On the 18th of August he was informed by the police authorities that Mosher and Douglas were suspected of being the kidnappers of CHARLEY ROSS, and the same day informed them of these suspicions and that the authorities were looking for them. About the middle of August, by request of Mosher and at his expense, he came to Philadelphia, ostensibly to help his sister move to New York, but really to learn whether the house in which Mosher's family were then living was being

watched by the police. Before leaving New York he arranged with Mosher to put the following personal in a newspaper if he found everything right: "Napoleon I have seen them and they are well." If, on the contrary, the house was being watched, it was to be changed to—"they are not well," thus indicating to Mosher whether the police of this city had or had not found out the residence of his family.

It was on the 18th of August that Superintendent Walling had the first interview with Westervelt, and endeavored to engage him to help him find Mosher and Douglas. Declining to do it at that time, several days after he agreed to assist him. Before the second interview with the Superintendent, on the 20th of August, his sister, Mrs. Mosher, with her family, moved to New York and lived with Westervelt's family nearly two months; and a few days after their arrival Mosher and Douglas came to his house. At that time he walked about the streets with Douglas, who returned to his house with him, where they all remained in conference for some time. He admitted having seen them afterwards at his house at two different times during the day and in the night.

On five different occasions he saw them in a beer saloon, where they had private conferences together. At one of these interviews they arranged to go to Rondout on the following day, where it was proposed to commit a burglary. Though the plan was not carried out, they remained together on that trip two days and nights, and returning to New York took a meal together at a restaurant before separating. Before going on this trip he told a person (not an officer) that he was going,

and when he returned said he had been up the river with Mosher and Douglas. In September he requested an employee at the saloon to let him know if he should see chalk marks on the cellar door of the saloon, as that was a signal that these men were in the city, and he knew where to find them. During one of his calls at the saloon, he wrote a letter and left it in charge of the proprietor, directed to no one, but to be given to either Mosher or Douglas, showing their interests were one and the same, and it made no difference which of the two got it. At another time he said to the same person: "I'll tell you confidentially how I can make from ten to fifteen thousand dollars, but by doing so I would have to give somebody away who would be sent to the State's Prison for ten or twenty years or for life."

Thrice he met them at a fortune teller's, and several times on the streets of New York.

In August he again visited Philadelphia, and this time found his way to Germantown and inquired about the pecuniary resources of my family.

While on the way to obtain the letter Mosher had written to Mrs. Murdock, the officer with him spoke of his visit to the same place in company with Mosher and Douglas, and asked him whether at the time they were in Rondout in September CHARLEY ROSS was with them. "He replied: "No he was not with us at this time."

Of another officer who told him that if *he* had been put on the case he would have got the men, Westervelt inquired "How?" The officer replied: "I would have watched *you*; my mate and I would have hired a house near to where you lived, and kept a constant watch on

your house." His reply to this was: "Then you would have got us."

At every interview Superintendent Walling had with him, 'he did not know' the whereabouts of Mosher and Douglas or where they could be found, and would have to wait for them to communicate with him. The Superintendent learning that he had seen them, accused him of deception, when he admitted having seen them at two different times on the street, but claimed that he soon lost them in the crowd. He never informed the authorities that Mrs. Mosher lived in his house, or where she went to live after she removed. Before the death of the men he said he did not know where to get any of Mosher's writing, but after they were killed he recollected the letter Mosher wrote, and which he himself had mailed to Rondout. He also knew that another person had written to Mosher, and, instead of Mosher's writing the answer, Westervelt wrote it at his dictation, by this means preventing the authorities from obtaining the handwriting of the chief conspirator.

He told one witness that if these men were arrested the child would not live three days, an opinion on his part which accords precisely with every theory contained in the letters; while the inference natural to any one not cognizant of the plans of the abductors would be that the arrest of the thieves would secure the fruits of their crime, that the taking of the kidnappers would lead directly to the recovery of the child.

On the 15th and 19th of November, two personals appeared in the New York *Herald* with a heading which had never been used before in this correspondence, "Saul of Tarsus." This had been dictated by the writer

in the letter of November the 6th. On the day after the one fixed by that personal for the meeting, when Westervelt was told by Mr. Walling that the parties had failed to keep the engagement and get the money for the child, he showed him a memorandum book in which was written "Saul of Tarsus." There is nothing in the heading which could cause suspicion that it referred to the abduction, but there is in the personal itself the words, "Action must now be simultaneous." Throughout the letters the abductors demanded that the money must be paid before the child would be given up, while in a personal in August we had said, "Action must be simultaneous." When he read this personal, so similar to the other which had been published, with which he seemed familiar, he concluded it must refer to the same thing, and wrote it in his book.

On the evening of December the 12th (Saturday), the night before the abductors were killed, he met both Mosher and Douglas in a house, and by appointment he again met Douglas alone on the street about 8 o'clock the same night. They walked leisurely through the streets until 1 o'clock in the morning, stopping at restaurants and other places, passing police offices, going near many police stations. Arriving at a hotel, by invitation of Douglas Westervelt remains all night; they register fictitious names, occupy the same room, talk about the child, speak about how it is proposed to get the ransom, make arrangements for a subsequent meeting at a billiard saloon on either Tuesday the 15th, Wednesday the 16th, or Thursday the 17th, of the following week, and leave the hotel early in the morning; Douglas going to meet Mosher, who staid at a different hotel, but Westervelt to his home.

Ample opportunity was thus afforded at this time, had he intended acting in good faith with the authorities, to have fulfilled his engagements with them by notifying them of this meeting, or by causing the arrest of Douglas.

He is thus found in company with these men a few days before the abduction, and during the five months they lived afterwards; he not only meets them, but is in company with them for hours and days at a time, until the night before they were killed. He sleeps in the same room with Douglas, leaving him early in the morning never again to see him alive.

The defense mainly consisted in asserting the entire falsity of the statements of the witnesses for the Commonwealth as applied to him, and thus attempted to nullify the charge sought to be established against him, that he was in complicity with Mosher and Douglas. His counsel in his opening address claimed that there had been no real proof, that it was merely a suspicion that the prisoner was a conspirator with Mosher and Douglas, and stated that at one period of the case it was the intention of his colleague and himself to have offered no testimony; however, it being the desire of the prisoner to be examined, he proposed giving him the opportunity of making his own statement. The principal witnesses called for the defense were the prisoner and his wife.

The main object of Mrs. Westervelt's evidence was to account for her husband's whereabouts between the 26th of June and the 7th of July, in order to show that he did not take an active part in the abduction of the children. She accounted for each day during that period,

specifically stating where he had been, and what he had been doing. She asserted that she did not know he was engaged by the authorities to assist in looking for Mosher and Douglas, and that he had not told her where he stayed the night of the 12th of December.

Westervelt in his examination denied being criminally associated with Mosher and Douglas. He denied having been in Philadelphia or Germantown during the latter part of July or beginning of August. He denied the statement which the officer said he made about CHARLEY ROSS not being with them when at Rondout. He denied the statement about the signal marks on the cellar door. He admitted that he did not inform Superintendent Walling of his meetings with Mosher and Douglas. He admitted that he had seen Mosher and Douglas five times in the beer saloon. He admitted that he did not tell the authorities of his appointment to meet Douglas on the 15th, 16th, or 17th of December. He claimed that he never engaged to inform on Mosher, but was willing to give up Douglas; yet gave no reasons for not informing the authorities on the last night he was in company with him. He claimed that through information obtained from him, more knowledge of the doings of Mosher and Douglas had been gained than through any other source—yet his information was always given after it was of no practical benefit.

Without stating further his admissions and denials, the case when the testimony closed chiefly depended on the credibility of the witnesses.

The District Attorney, Mr. Sheppard, after reviewing the testimony for the commonwealth and the prisoner, closed his address by saying:

"Westervelt and Mosher were thoroughly intimate and cognizant of each other's acts, and that shows there existed relations between them which do not appear on the surface. Mosher gives him a letter to carry, shows him the horse and wagon in which the child is to be carried away; Westervelt seeks to discover if Mosher's house is watched; he comes to Philadelphia to take care of Mosher's family, and when they flee to New York, Mosher places them in Westervelt's house, knowing that it is a safe place for them to go to. They reside there unreported; Mosher visits there; Westervelt meets them by appointment; Douglas tells Westervelt their future plans about the child—all showing that there was a bond and a link between them which satisfied them Westervelt would not betray them. If they had not understood each other and had confidence in each other, Douglas would not have unbosomed himself and told him what Westervelt says he told him. All these facts are inexplicable upon any theory other than that of a relation between them which satisfied them that this man would not 'give them away.' There were two agencies at work in this case: the Ross family working through the police, and the abductors through the letters. Westervelt comes in just where he is wanted. He gives Mr. Walling sufficient information to keep the police employed, while, in the meantime, the letters keep flowing in. * * * Having referred to the facts of the case, I have not endeavored to allude to any matters which would influence your passions: God knows there is enough inflammable matter in the case. I ask your attention to the evidence itself and to the law bearing upon it. I ask you to

consider that evidence, and to determine from it this transaction, and not to be misled by any false colors thrown over it; and, in the name of Providence, I trust that your deliberations may have a power over future transactions that may be a source of congratulation to you on future occasions."

The counsel for the prisoner argued that "the evidence in the case was only of a circumstantial character, such as leads only to an inference of guilt; to convict on such evidence, the consciences of the jury must be convinced beyond the possibility of a doubt. No conjecture, no inference would be sufficient; the conviction alone, that the defendant is guilty as proven by the evidence, would be sufficient."

The Judge in his charge to the jury, referring to Westervelt's testimony, used the following language: "By his testimony there is a direct issue, as to the truth or falsity of the evidence; you will reconcile the testimony of the Commonwealth and the prisoner if you can; but if you cannot, you must be governed by the weight of the evidence, or the greater number of witnesses who support a natural theory of the case, or who testify to the greater number of consistent and leading facts which amount to proof of the crime or innocence of the prisoner. But if in the investigation of all the facts, you find a witness who has stated some material facts which are not truthful, then his whole testimony must be cast out, no matter on which side his evidence rests; for the maxim of the law is, false in one particular, false in all. You cannot reconcile truth and falsehood in one witness; but be certain of the falsehood, for an inaccurate statement, not to the essence of the offense, or

mistaken data in many other questions, may be only errors of memory, which are not falsehoods. Review the testimony with calm judgment, and fear not to apply every test to its accuracy. You are to decide by the testimony: if to find the prisoner guilty, it must be beyond a reasonable doubt, or he goes free. Give him that doubt, if it be an honest, manly doubt, derived from the whole testimony; but do not manufacture it from weakness or sympathy, either for himself or his family, for this is no hour for sympathy. Whilst you have gazed upon that scene of misery surrounding that prisoner's dock for three weeks, you must recollect that if there be guilt upon that brow, that for one year and two months the voice of CHARLEY ROSS has been lost to his home, and that while the prisoner has his children in life around him, another father mourns his son through this terrible crime."

The case was given to the jury on Saturday evening, September 19th, and on Monday morning a verdict of guilty was rendered on the last three counts of the indictment. Efforts were at once made by Westervelt's counsel to secure a new trial, but without success, and he was sentenced to pay a fine of one dollar, the costs of prosecution, and to undergo an imprisonment at solitary confinement at labor for the term of seven years. The result of this protracted trial, which continued three weeks, beginning August 30th, and ending September 21st, seemed to accord with public sentiment.

During all this time great excitement prevailed in the city. The trial was the topic of conversation everywhere, and the developments which were made during

its progress were eagerly sought for by every one. Daily the court room was densely crowded with an audience who listened attentively to every word, and manifested the greatest interest to learn something of this remarkable case, and to hear read the anonymous letters which had been received from the abductors.

A large corps of reporters from other cities, as well as from our own, was daily in attendance, and full reports of the proceedings from day to day were published in the newspapers both here and in New York. So great was the desire to learn the result of the deliberations of the jury on Monday morning, that before the clock struck the hour of ten, not only was the court room densely packed with people, but the hall and stairway were packed with an excited crowd. The street was equally crowded, to such an extent that it was difficult for persons to make their way through the dense mass of people. As soon as the verdict became known, there was a general feeling of approval that a just decision had been reached, and the fact now for the first time definitely and prominently appeared to the public that Mosher and Douglas were the abductors, and that William Westervelt was joined with them in their foul conspiracy to extort money by the concealment of CHARLEY ROSS.

The two chief actors in this great crime escaped legal punishment by a felon's death, and the third is now paying a well-deserved penalty in obedience to the demands of violated law. Thus three of those intimately connected with the abduction have been brought to justice, and have received a merited punishment for their awful guilt.

The array of testimony presented in this narrative, showing that Mosher and Douglas were the kidnappers, the fact that they were suspected in the latter part of July of being guilty of the crime, and the many statements of their movements and doings subsequent to that time, alluded to in the history of this case, will naturally suggest to the reader the query, "Why were they not captured?" In reply to this it should be borne in mind that very much of what is related of these men was learned after their death, and it would be very unjust to hold the authorities responsible for pursuing or not pursuing a certain course of action with the light and knowledge we now possess. There were difficulties of no ordinary kind connected with the search for these men. The crime itself was of so atrocious a character, and the public excitement so intense, as to make it necessary for the men continually to change their locality, which is not ordinarily done by criminals, thus placing unusual obstacles in the way of the police to finding them. Besides, so long as they had one interested with them in constant communication with the authorities, they could, by using the information he gave them, elude the police, and in this they were most successful, until shot down while committing another crime. It was well stated in one of our daily papers by a writer who was familiar with everything that was being done in the search, that "the determined resistance of the police soon became quite manifest to the abductors, and every plan they tried to devise to get at the ransom money, and then effect their escape, was so beset with danger to themselves that they abandoned plan after plan, and so many months passed away. This

has been the one great point of difficulty with them in attempting an exchange of the stolen child for the ransom money. If there had been any concession allowed to the brigands, any negotiations intended to recover the child simply, and let them get the ransom money and escape, there is but little room for doubt that CHARLEY ROSS could have been recovered long ago, just as stolen bonds and the proceeds of bank robberies are recovered. Then child-stealing would have run wild in the United States; kidnapping children for ransom would have been succeeded by the capture of men and women, for there are men and women for whom brigands could have extorted hundreds of thousands of dollars of ransom money. But the treatment of the CHARLEY ROSS case by the police authorities, and the excited public feeling on the subject, have demonstrated to all malefactors of whatever grade that brigandage cannot be made a safe profession in the United States." The failure to find CHARLEY, or even to learn anything about him after the death of the kidnappers, notwithstanding the extraordinary efforts to that end, has led many to question whether Mosher and Douglas were the abductors. In the minds, however, of those conversant with all the circumstances, there is not a shadow of doubt that they were the projectors and perpetrators of this crime. The principal reasons for this belief will be grouped together, so that the reader may readily see the evidences on which it rests.

There are many statements of facts interspersed through the letters, which could not have been known to the writer unless he had had possession of the children, facts which had not been published before the letters containing allusions to them were written.

In the first letter it is stated by the writer that they have got CHARLES BREWSTER ROSS—his full name being here given, which, as before stated, was no doubt elicited from Walter.

In letter No. 7, it is said: "He is afraid he won't get home in time to go to Atlantic City, to be with his mother when Sophy comes back." Such a promise had been made to Walter and CHARLEY by their mother before she went to Atlantic City, and it was so impressed on the child's mind that, notwithstanding his isolation, he remembered it, and fretted lest he would not get back in time to go to his mother at the sea-shore.

In No. 8, the writer desiring to give some evidences that they had possession of the child, says: "You remember his striped stockings are darned in two or three places where they had holes in them." Before receiving this information, no person—not even the nurse—had thought of the darns in the stockings, which she put on him the afternoon he was taken away.

In the same letter the following questions are given to ask Walter: "Ask Walter if we did not put the blanket up in front of him, and CHARLEY in behind to hide him? Ask Walter if we did not say we would go down to Aunt Susy's before we went to the main street to buy torpedoes?" To both of these questions put to Walter, in such a way as not to be leading ones, he answered in the affirmative. Again the writer says: "We have seen CHARLEY about four days ago, and his whole cry is he wants Walter to come to him, and he is afraid he will not go to Atlantic City with his mother."

In letter No. 17, it is said: "Ask Walter if we did not keep giving him pieces of candy as we rode along?"

Walter's testimony confirmed this statement, and he said moreover, "They gave CHARLEY more candy than me."

Also "If you have received any other letters headed other than Ros or Mr. Ros, they are forgeries." All the letters I received written in the handwriting peculiar to this series of letters, were addressed to "Ros," or "Mr. Ros"—thus far confirming their assertion that they were the parties who stole and had the child in their keeping.

In letter No. 18 the writer says, "Ask one of your domestics or Mrs. Ross if CHARLEY did not have on the afternoon of the first of July a narrow faded pink ribbon tied around his head to keep the hair out of his eyes?" This ribbon was not thought of by any one until attention was called to it in this letter, when a part of the same piece of ribbon was found in the house. This fact is mentioned by the writer as positive proof that they have possession of CHARLEY. In letter No. 19 reference is made to CHARLEY's suffering from a complaint sometimes incident to childhood. On inquiry it was found that on one or two occasions while at home he suffered from the same ailment.

These among other things are stated by the writer of the anonymous letters, and are strong proofs that whoever wrote them, took the children away and had control of CHARLEY. In addition to these evidences is the fact that Mosher was the writer of the letters. They are in a hand pronounced by experts to be identical with that of the letter procured at Rondout, and which Westervelt saw William Mosher write.

Again, Mosher and Douglas knew early in August

that they were suspected of being the abductors, and became thenceforth fugitives for months, being without a home, wandering from place to place to elude the pursuing officers, which would have been unnecessary had they been innocent. Again, Douglas on the night before he was killed said to Westervelt, "What could they do with us if they *did* get us? They would have to prove it, they would have to find some one who *saw* us with the child;" and added further that they were about to adopt a new plan for exchanging the money for the child; and before dying he confessed—"I helped Mosher to steal CHARLEY ROSS." A further proof is the recognition by Walter of the bodies of the two men at the Morgue in Brooklyn, as the persons who took CHARLEY and himself away the afternoon of the 1st of July.

And since the death of these men I have not received any letters written in the same hand or style as those sent me up to the time of that event. In addition to these evidences that they were the kidnappers, is the *admission* of *Mosher's* family that he and Douglas stole the child. It will be seen by this summing up of these various evidences, that we are not resting on a mere suspicion, but it has been fully ascertained and clearly proved that these were the men who committed the crime.

There are very good reasons also for believing that neither Mosher nor Douglas retained possession of the child after the night of the 2d of July, but placed him in the care of either a confederate or of some innocent party, and although full reliance cannot be placed on what is written in the letters on this

point, yet there are many circumstances corroborating the statements of the writer. I propose to make selections from the letters of what is there said on this point, and to follow them with facts and theories derived from other sources.

The children were taken away the afternoon of July 1st. On the morning of the 4th of July the first letter from the abductors, dated Philadelphia, July 3d, was received.

In letter No 7, it is stated as a reason why they had not replied sooner to one of our personals, that "they had gone into the country, as much as anything to see how CHARLEY was."

In No 11 it is said, "We will give you the satisfaction of knowing that he is within 100 miles of this city." At the time this letter was written they were living in this city, as is indicated not only by the date and post-mark, but also by the quick reply we had to our personals, as we frequently received answers the same day on which the personals appeared.

In No 13 it is said, "Your child is not in possession of any woman or family."

In No 16: "We would require at least a few hours to examine the money, and then but a few hours more would be necessary to place your child in your possession."

In No 17: "We saw CHARLEY about four days ago."

In No 18: "We don't go near him often; we have nothing to do with guarding him, though we have seen him four or five times since July the 2d."

In No 19: "His custodian got him some medicine which helped him."

In No 21: "I tell you positively, and to save you further trouble and anxiety, that your child has not been seen by any human being since the 3d of July, other than by the party who have him in charge. We could not take him five miles without being arrested." These are the principal statements made in the letters tending to show that the abductors placed the child in the keeping of some one, while they carried on the negotiations to get the money. Other reasons for believing that they put him in charge of some one else, are as follows: Mosher's family say that by the 3d of July both Douglas and Mosher had returned to their home in Philadelphia. And it is not probable that they brought CHARLEY to their house, but more likely that during the interval between the 1st and the 3d of July they drove away with him and handed him over to the person with whom previous arrangements had been made to secrete him, while at the same time they disposed of the horse and wagon.

About the 1st of August they left this city, and never returned to stay any length of time, having no home. They remained but a short time in any one place as the dates and post-marks of the letters indicate. At one time we hear of them in Bridgeport, Connecticut, the place from which they took the boat, again on the river near Newark, New Jersey, where they altered the boat under one of the bridges of that city, and again they go in the same boat to Bay Ridge, Long Island. They knew that they were being closely watched and tracked, and were liable to be arrested at any time for this very crime of child-stealing, and certainly they would not keep the child with them during

their wanderings, for had they been captured, the fact of the child being with them would have been indubitable evidence of their guilt, and to this Douglas referred when he said to Westervelt; "they would have to prove it on us; they would have to find some one who saw us with the child." Besides, the shrewd scoundrel who was working out the plot, and who had so skillfully and carefully guarded every avenue to prevent detection, can hardly be supposed to have had in his actual possession the very strongest evidence of his atrocious crime, and to have been carrying around with him the living and conclusive testimony of his guilt. For these reasons we believe that as soon as possible the child was placed in charge of some one else to keep until the exchange could be arranged, and that the abductors seldom went to the place of his concealment.

Daily are we met by the inquiries, "What are your theories of the case now? Do you think CHARLEY is still alive? After the death of Mosher and Douglas, what motive could any one have for continuing to keep him?"

In answer to the first question, we can have no theory outside of the facts which have been detailed in this history, and as to the consummation—be it happy or sorrowful—we look with a certainty to the future, under Providence, to disclose it. In answer to the second question, we are bound by both reason and instinct to assume that the child is still alive until we *know* that he is dead. So long as his dead body is not found, or evidence obtained to prove his death, so long must we indulge the hope that he will eventually be restored

alive. The evidence is as conclusive as anything short of actual visible proof can be, that either the child was living on Saturday, December 12th, 1874, or else that the brigands did not know anything to the contrary at that time. It should be borne in mind also that the abductors were marked men, well known to the authorities, suspected of the kidnapping, and they were fully aware of the fact that they were being hunted for, and that too by those whose vigilance and persistence was equal to their own. Had they lived they would at some time early in the future most certainly have been arrested. Possessing this knowledge, it would seem incredible that they would add the crime of wilful murder to that already committed; besides, it was their interest to keep the child alive, so long as they entertained any hope of obtaining the ransom, which they had not abandoned the night before they were killed, as stated by Douglas to Westervelt. Had the child died a natural death, we cannot see any reasons for withholding the information from us. As to the motive any one could have in keeping him, after the death of the principals in the crime, many conjectures can be made; but they are only conjectures, and afford little light and less comfort to any one. At first sight it would seem that an accomplice would at once give up the child after his associates were dead, upon whose management of the case depended the successful exchange of the prize for a ransom. But would not the same cupidity which actuated him to receive the stolen child cause the same person to keep him still, in the hope of getting the same amount that was demanded as a ransom by the abductors while they lived?

It is a certainty that for five months, from July 1st to December 12th, CHARLEY was most effectually concealed. We have never had a single trace of him after Walter was dropped from the wagon; and as he was successfully hidden away for so long a time, despite the diligent search which had been made for him, it can be seen how easily he could still be concealed by the same person in the same place. This theory, however, is based on the supposition that he was placed with a confederate, which is by no means certain. He may have been placed in charge of persons ignorant of his identity and that any such crime as the abduction of CHARLEY ROSS had been committed—living in some isolated place, where little or no communication is had with the outer world.

Fear of detection would be a powerful motive to prevent this person (if a confederate) from giving him up, not only from fear of lawful punishment, but of an aroused and avenging community. CHARLEY when taken away could talk plainly, and there is little doubt but that he would be able to give information as to where he had been and the party who had charge of him for so long a time. These are but theories. We have no information which sheds one ray of light on the mysterious subject, and my reader, with the facts which have been presented in this volume, is as fully able to draw correct conclusions as those who have been conversant with all the circumstances from the time of the abduction to the present day.

One of the remarkable things connected with the search in this case, and which is inexplicable, is that no reliable trace was ever found of the horse and buggy

used by the kidnappers in conveying the children away, even with the added stimulus of a reward of one thousand dollars which was offered for any information which would lead to their discovery; and through the great and wide publicity which was given by descriptive hand-bills, posters and newspapers, it was reasonable to suppose that some one would have come forward who could give information of them after the 1st of July. It would seem sheer impossibility that the horse and wagon could have been so absolutely and successfully disposed of. Yet so far as our knowledge extends they vanished from sight as though dissolved in air.

There is exhibited from the beginning of this transaction to the death of the criminals a certain completeness in detail and finish in carrying out all the plans that precludes the idea that the kidnappers were ruffians of the vulgar type—and now that the crime is inaugurated there would no doubt have been plenty of imitators had these men been successful in proving that this branch of thieving industry would be profitable.

In reviewing the circumstances of the case from the time of the abduction, everything appears to us dark and impenetrable. Failure has marked every effort to find the criminals, or discover their precious booty; and it was only after human skill had failed that the retributive justice of God brought to light and punishment the wicked perpetrators of the crime. Failure accompanied every movement of the police of our own city to trace the offenders whilst they were living in our midst; failure followed the humane purposes of some of the wisest and most thoughtful of our citizens, who were

intensely interested, not only in the restoration of the child, but also in the discovery of the kidnappers, and in protecting society from similar depredations in the future; failure attended every step of the pursuit, and all the plans to capture the men, after they fled to New York and its vicinity: and since the sudden and fearful death of the villains who had been thus hounded, the same darkness broods over the destiny of the missing boy, and the same want of success follows every well devised scheme and every hopeful theory that has attended the case from the very beginning. In the history of crime it has rarely, if ever, happened that so much effort has been concentrated, and so much means expended, in any one direction, followed by such an entire want of success.

To God alone belongeth secret things; in His own way, and in His own time, will He reveal what He wills.

Two years have passed away since CHARLEY was kidnapped from his home, and in the meantime events of far more startling moment have taken place, and for a time have engrossed public attention, and have then passed out of the public mind, to be followed by others; and yet the continued absence of this little child is still as fresh as the day on which it became known that he was stolen. The dread uncertainty which surrounds his fate, and the loathing of the criminals who so violated every human instinct, gives the matter such a terrible reality that but few parents will easily forget it. The public now know that there are creatures ready and able to commit the heinous offense of child-stealing upon sufficient inducement, that is, a reasonable pros-

pect of mere gain; and now realize the feeling of insecurity in the impressive fact that it is a *daylight* crime —one needing no shadow of darkness—one in truth that can be done only during the play hours of broad day; for with the coming night, so propitious to ordinary crime, comes the sleeping time of the child, which is its best protection. The ease also with which the crime can be committed is now brought home to every one, and the tremendous influence which may be brought to bear on parents by means of threatening letters, by which the kidnappers hold the key to the situation, is fearful to think of. Well may parents be struck with terror in realizing this peril, and in feeling that their children are no longer safe upon the lawns or lanes which were once thought as safe as the nursery or school-room. Well may they shudder at the bare possibility of one of their offspring being snatched from them by miscreants for vile traffic; and truly may the alarming questions be asked: Who is safe? What parent can trust his children out of his sight, if kidnapping is so simple and recovery so doubtful, nay impossible?

In some of its aspects this crime is worse than murder, being not only torture to the child, who by terror and confinement must necessarily suffer greatly, to say nothing of the anguish of the parents. So startling, indeed, is the subject in all its bearings, that it has assumed a national character, and really affects every household—none can be indifferent. The instincts of parental affection are identical the civilized world over. There is scarcely a father or mother throughout the land who has not been directly struck in the tenderest affec-

tion and the most precious interests of life by this flagrant instance of kidnapping a little child, solely for the purpose of extorting a sum of money as a ransom; and the protection demanded by childish helplessness makes all men akin in resisting this most unnatural crime. It is for these reasons that public feeling has been so intensely aroused, and continues to be so wonderfully alive to this case, and not simply because CHARLEY ROSS was stolen and has not been recovered.

In our blessed religion we note as a distinguishing trait of that Charity and Love which separates Christianity from all other systems of faith, that the Master loved little children and bade them come to him, and found in a little child the highest type of faith, truth and purity; and no incident in the scriptures is more sadly interesting than that of Joseph who was sold into slavery by his brethren. To this day nothing appeals to our sympathies so readily as the sorrow of little children. There is not, cannot be a mother who does not feel that she would rather see her child dead than be subjected to a fate which has befallen our little boy. The imagination surrounds the victim with terrors compared to which death would be a blessing. Imprisonment, starvation, stripes, neglect, lonely weeping through the long night watches; no love to caress him, to minister to his childish ailings, to rescue and to nourish him. The agony and suspense lives on; and the thoughts will come up: With whom is he? Are they kind to him? Do his childish eyes which knew nothing but home and home kindness see sights revolting? Is he closely confined, or has he been carried far away to avoid pursuit? Does

he hear brutal language? Are the scenes about him so strange that his memory of us gradually fails, and his recollections of love, home and friends will all be swept away? Will he be taught to forget the hands that nurtured him and raised him from infancy, and taught him to say, "Our Father which art in Heaven," or that other simple prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep," and will he regard some bad scheming woman as his mother? Stolen by thieves, will he be taught to be a thief? Will he grow to love crime? Will he live to reap the bitter fruits of it? Will he live to grow up in ignorance of love, gentleness, goodness, in ignorance of all that he should know, in knowledge of pain, hunger, ill-treatment, in knowledge of all that he should never know?

Stern death would be far kinder than the rude arms that snatched away our little boy; for when death robs us of our loved ones, we recall with a sad pleasure the winsome ways; but when this greater desolation comes the remembrance of pet words, childish phrases, cunning tricks, and affectionate glances crowds upon us until memory, too faithful, forces us almost to pray for utter forgetfulness.

Did we know that CHARLEY had died, then would we know his abiding place; would know that danger, sickness, trouble, sin and pain, could disturb him no more. The very *uncertainty* increases our agony a thousand fold.

> "Doomed through long suspense to bear
> The hope that keeps alive despair."

Yet this very uncertainty incites us to continued effort to learn what has become of him, and makes us more

eagerly anxious to find him if living. Is it too much then to ask a sympathizing public to continue all efforts to aid in finding the place of concealment of our little boy, or in recovering him?

The wail is still heard—so oft repeated—no tidings—unless to end in disappointment. Will you not, fathers and mothers, work now and earnestly, lest the hour draw nigh when, in the desolation of your own homes, your hearts may perchance take up the sorrowful plaint of "a stolen child," and that child your own? Should this appeal result in discovering the hiding-place of our little boy and he be found alive, every parent and every child in the land would breathe more freely, and thousands of hearts would be filled and thrilled with great gladness, when the telegraph and the press shall announce to the sympathizing public, "The lost is found; CHARLEY ROSS is home again!"

It has frequently been said, "So long a time has elapsed since CHARLEY was taken from his home that you would not know him; he would be so much changed in his appearance that he could not be recognized even by his parents." Yes, his beautiful curls may be cut off; his face may be stained, or even burnt by acids, as has been done with other stolen children; but his mouth will be wreathed with the same familiar smile, and his large, full eyes dance in the same well-remembered loving way; the expression of his face will still be that of CHARLEY ROSS, and of no one else. Should he ever grow out of *our* recognition, the child would surely know his mother. The early impressions of home and its surroundings will never be obliterated; the incidents connected with his abduction—his being taken away

with Walter in the wagon, and afterwards his being driven off without his brother; his distress and loneliness, his longing for home, his solitary confinement—all these things, so terrible to a child, have made impressions on his childish memory which never will be effaced, except by death.

Whatever darkness still enshrouds this case, and however hopeless it may look to others, so long as there remains a doubt as to whether the child is living or dead, our duty urges and our affections stimulate us to a persistent and eager pursuit in the search for our missing boy. Hitherto we have left nothing undone that we knew how to do; nothing untried which had any reasonable appearance of yielding success; nothing untraced, however slight or trifling, which seemed to lead in the direction of the lost one. Our time, our energies, our thoughts, and our means, have been unsparingly given to this object, and we have the same unchanged purpose before us for the future—leaving the ninety and nine "safe in the fold," we purpose still to look for the "one that is not." Our search is by no means a hopeless one, and so long as we do not know that he is dead, we have a basis of trust on which to work. Trusting the result to the Providence of Him whose Fatherly care is over all His children, and whose promises are to us and our children, we are bound to use all the means He affords us to find out what has become of our unfortunate child; and yet the constant stretching of the hand to reach something tangible in the midst of the darkness is a fearful strain on our faith. Those only who can put themselves in our place, by imagining the little one they so tenderly and lovingly

lift to their knee snatched from them, as has been our boy, can in any degree understand us when we say our life's work is to seek and to find the lost one of *our* household.

We, therefore, send this unvarnished story of our misfortune, and of this great wrong, on a mission to its readers, in the hope that familiarized with the features of CHARLEY, by looking at his picture and stimulated by the plain recital of the facts here narrated, and we trust, blessed of God, some one of them directed in this search may be the happy means of restoring him to his home.

We are almost daily in receipt of some intelligence which keeps alive the hope that out of the multitude of means employed, we may get sufficient light to guide us to a successful issue. Out of this personal suffering has come this much of public good, and we derive great satisfaction from it, that the want of success in this, the first clearly defined case of brigandage in this country, has rendered for years to come, a repetition of the crime most unlikely. The intense public indignation which this abduction has aroused, the widespread publicity it has obtained, will deter the boldest thieves from attempting a like outrage. This is certainly a source of great gratulation to the public, and most heartily, although mourning our own loss, are we able to join in it.

God save other parents from a like trial, and all other children from the fate of our dear little CHARLEY.

APPENDIX.

AFTER I had finished writing the narrative of the abduction and search for my little son, and it was almost all in type, I received the following note from Professor Leib, of Saint Paul, Minnesota, whose son Freddie unaccountably disappeared about five years ago, and has never since been heard from:

MR. C. K. ROSS.—*Dear Sir.*—I learn you are expecting to publish a book on the abduction of and search for your dear little son CHARLEY. If, in the course of its pages, you could briefly allude to the loss of our dear little Freddie, as narrated in the enclosed circular, I would be very thankful. W. H. LEIB.

Allusion has been briefly made in the book to the loss of Mr. Leib's son, but it has not been so fully noticed as I should have been glad to have stated it, had I known the wishes of the parents. On receiving the above note, I proposed to add an appendix to my narrative, containing such an account of the disappearance of the child, and the search for him, as the father might prepare. With this explanation the following letter and circular are added, with the hope and prayer that the further publicity of this case of kidnapping, which will be given to it by means of this book, may result in awakening a more extended interest in behalf of Freddie Leib, and in restoring to his distressed parents their long absent child.

SAINT PAUL, MINN., *October 25, 1875.*

W. C. LOCHERTY, ESQ., 317 BROADWAY, N. Y.—*Kind Friend:*—To your kind favor desiring me to refresh your memory with the particulars regarding the loss of my little son, I have deemed best to reply in the form of a circular which would also serve for the public whenever I have occasion thus to use it.

It was in the summer of 1871, and I had been located in Quincy, Ills., only a little more than a year, when Freddie disappeared (Freddie Leib—pronounced "Libe"). My profession was that of a vocalist and teacher of vocal music, and as such I was employed at the Quincy Female Seminary. My first year's work having just ended, and the Seminary closed for the usual Summer Vacation, I went to Chicago, expecting to visit friends for a few weeks, and to remain in Chicago if certain offers made me by parties there proved to be acceptable. I had left my wife and three children—Freddie being one of them—well and happy, on Wednesday, the 21st day of June, and had been in Chicago just a week, when, on Wednesday, June 28, I received a telegram from my wife, stating that Freddie was "missing since Monday evening, and no trace yet." I at once took the night express on the C. B. & Q. R. R. and reached home early next morning. You will observe that it was now already two days and three nights since he disappeared. News of the sad event had, for reasons that you will gather from what follows, only just now become general; and I found the city in excitement as I hurried to my distracted family. With the kindly aid of the mayor and other city officers, a large meeting of citizens was hurriedly assembled at the City Hall, and a thorough and systematic search instituted. Telegrams were sent out in every direction, and a liberal reward offered. This done, I devoted myself to the task of finding out the circumstances under which he disappeared. They are substantially as follows:

I learned from my wife that Freddie had left the house at about six o'clock, P. M., with instructions from the hired girl to look for his brother Charley, and tell him to get ready for supper.

Freddie had not been in the habit of leaving the house, or its immediate vicinity, without permission or to do some errand.

The day had been very warm, and after repeated entreaties, his mother had allowed him to remove his shoes and run barefoot during the afternoon. He had spent most of the day on the opposite side of the street, playing in and about some old omnibuses and carriages that stood about a carriage manufactory. Part of the time he was alone, and part of it there was with him a little colored boy (child of the servant of the house

where we boarded). Freddie was passionately fond of horses, and of riding in any kind of conveyance. He exhibited this fondness by running into the street, and hanging on the backs of buggies or wagons, and there taking a swinging ride of four or five rods. Sometimes parties, at his request for a ride, would stop and take him in, and after a little distance let him down again, when he always came back to his play, at or near the house.

It was near seven o'clock on the evening of his disappearance, when the family (Dr. Rushlanb's) with whom we were then boarding, sat down to tea. The other little son, Charley, who was two years older than Freddie, had in the meantime come in, but had seen nothing of Freddie. The supper bell was rung a second time for Freddie, all the others being present at the table. But as he failed to appear, Mrs. Leib became very anxious, and leaving the others at the table, started out to look for him. Just at that moment a valued lady friend from a neighboring town called and detained her somewhat,—not over fifteen minutes. After searching about three hours without success, she determined to inform the police. This was done between ten and eleven o'clock at night, by Dr. Rushlanb. Mrs. Leib spent a night of woe, as may be imagined. But few persons knew of the occurrence as yet, and Dr. R's family believed the boy had played with the neighbors' children and turned in with some of them for the night. With these and other conjectures, Mrs. L. wore out the hours of the night, in the hope that the early morning would bring some good tidings.

But when in the morning she personally met three policemen who had not heard a word of the occurrence, she felt deeply disappointed, and doubted whether the police had been as faithful as they should have been the previous evening. She then went to the police station herself, and again requested that the case be made known. She then visited all the schools in the city, Catholic, private, and public.

As still but few persons knew of it, and she was making her visits to the schools on foot, it took her most of the day. She then informed some of the newspaper men, (who had not yet heard a word of it,) and the "Quincy Evening Call," of that day, June 27th, published the first notice of his disappearance. As this paper did not circulate much among our friends, but few of them heard of it until next morning, when a fuller account appeared in the Quincy "Whig." Then our friends called and offered such assistance as was in their power.

As yet there was nothing known as to where he was really last seen: but acting on the supposition that he had perished somewhere, each

began making such search as seemed best. All this time I was still in Chicago, in ignorance of the sad affair.

My wife had made repeated attempts to telegraph to me, but was dissuaded by friends, who felt sanguine that the boy would be found, and so believing, thought best not to bring me home uselessly. But when on Wednesday evening he had not been heard from, I was telegraphed to, as stated heretofore. On my way home that night, my most dreadful reflections were, that so much time had already elapsed since he disappeared—two days and three nights.

In the search which was instituted at the citizens' meeting, every conceivable place was thoroughly explored. Lumber yards, lofts, cellar-ways, store-boxes, sink-holes, sewers, bridges, vaults, cisterns, barns, empty buildings, etc., were embraced. The house where we boarded was about three-fourths of a mile from the river. The child was much afraid of water, of the river especially, and would not have gone there unless induced by other children; but no children were found who saw him or knew of his whereabouts that evening, except the case that will be mentioned. Again, there was a night watchman, who patroled the shore of the river, and who went on duty early in the evening. However, to provide for the one contingency of his having lost his life there, against the ninety-nine that he had not, watchers were placed at different places for many miles down the river. The large reward offered induced very many persons, who, between Quincy and St. Louis, lived on and along the river, to make special efforts in the way of watch and search, especially a number of fishermen, who daily frequented the river below the city, and also the workmen who were then engaged in building a bridge across the river about fifteen miles below, at Hannibal.

Supposing he had been drowned, the body would, in the very warm weather at the time, have come to the surface; but while within three or four months other bodies, (some of children,) were found, no trace of Freddie was ever discovered. It should also be added that the river was very low at this time, and that many persons searched for the child who were actuated only by feelings of sympathy and friendship.

Handbills and other advertisements followed in rapid succession, sent out with photographs, &c., very similar to what has since been done in the Ross case. Hundreds of stories of "lost" children, or children that seemed "strange and uncomfortable," came to us, and many times in our great anxiety we scarcely knew in what direction to act first.

About the fifth day after his disappearance the following was related to me, which I have every reason to believe is reliable so far as it goes;

and strange to say, the substance of this item was told my wife before I returned from Chicago, but which, in her bewildered condition, and amid the many things told her at the time, she either did not notice, or else overlooked, viz: That as near seven o'clock as could be determined by other circumstances, our little Freddie stepped into a harness shop around on the north side of the block, (on the southwest corner of which were our living quarters,) and there asked for some straps to put on his whip-lash, remarking that he "was going to get a ride." The regular hands of the shop had left; only the proprietor's son, a boy about fourteen years old, was there. He knew Freddie well, because I passed the door of the shop every day on my way to and from the Seminary, and frequently had Freddie with me. This boy gave him straps, and then went up stairs to his supper, not looking after Freddie at all as he left the shop, but simply seeing him step out on the sidewalk.

When Freddie's disappearance was reported, this boy told his mother, and she then remembered that she herself had seen Freddie in the shop at the time her son gave him the straps.

Several days later, reliable information was received, that the day after Freddie disappeared, an old man with a rickety buggy was seen in the eastern suburban part of the city, going toward the country. He had a little boy with him, who was crying and apparently much displeased. As this old man passed a house that stood at the fork of two roads, he noticed a number of children in the yard (some of whom were fifteen years old) flying a kite; and as if to further pacify the boy, who already had his hands full of candies and the like, he stopped and induced the children to sell him their kite, to please the crying boy. When asked why the little boy cried and was so uneasy, he replied that he probably felt a little strange because he was only his uncle, and had just taken the child out of the Orphan Asylum, and was taking him to his home.

An Irish man-servant across the street also saw the man and boy, but was a little too far off to understand the conversation.

These young folks, supposing the man told the truth, thought no more about it, until the news of Freddie's loss became generally known.

A statement was also fully substantiated, that during the first night Freddie was gone, a child was frequently heard crying bitterly in the direction of a large timothy-grass field, in the outer edge of the city. Those who heard the cries supposed them to come from some children living beyond this field; but these families stated that none of their children had been crying during that night.

When these stories were made known to us, we sent detectives and

messengers into all parts of the county, on horseback and otherwise, and posted hand-bills in every post-office in that and the adjoining counties.

I will now simply indicate some of the circumstances that led to the supposition that he had been carried away:

During the week immediately preceding, an unusually large number of Italian organ-grinders infested the city. There were not less than thirty or forty, distributed in parties of from three to five. A so-called Yankee Robinson show exhibited in Quincy the Saturday preceding this unlucky Monday, and some of the teams and men did not get away until Monday. There were Gipsies in several places within four or five miles of the city; but *all* these people, Italians, showmen and Gipsies, had gone out of sight when I arrived home and Freddie's disappearance became fully known.

With the aid of our Chief of Police at the time, and later that of Allan Pinkerton and his men, all was done in the premises that could be. With their aid and advice, such measures were adopted and carried out, as have since been in the Charley Ross case. The cases, in all that pertains to the search, are similar, yea, almost identical. If Mr. Ross and I should meet, the one would be telling the other's story in relating his own. But as Mr. Ross's misfortune happened in a large city, and because he had wealthy relatives by whose aid he could furnish far more money than I in prosecuting the search, and because the indications *were from the first more plain that his boy had really been kidnapped*, his case gained a notoriety far greater than ours.

But fully aware of my child's indisposition to leave home uninfluenced or without permission, his terror of the river or any large body of water, the character and extent of the search that was made for him, as well as of what has since been done, and more especially his going into the shop for straps, remarking that he was going to "get a ride," and the other peculiar incidents related, I am convinced that my son was kidnapped; and I may add that in this impression I am sustained by every detective to whom I have been able to present the case in all its phases.

I had not much money, else I should have spent far more. I presume $7,000 will cover it; but this totally impoverished me.

The pictures of Freddie that were sent out. are copies of a good one taken in Davenport, Iowa, when he was a little over three years old. But in his facial appearance he had changed very little, if any. He was one month less than five years old when he disappeared. He was passionately fond of music, had a good, sweet voice, and could sing verses of several Sunday-school Hymns, and also of the song called "Old Dog Tray."

His eyes were dark blue; his hair quite dark brown, with considerable inclination to curl, especially when long. Fair complexion, rosy cheeks, dimple in chin, and also in cheeks when he smiled. Had lost none of his first teeth, which were small and close-set. Had several little moles on back of his neck and shoulders. Had two crowns where hair separates (most persons having but one). Was vaccinated on left arm, well up toward the shoulder, in two places about one-half an inch apart, just a little while before we lost him. Still hoping, I remain,

Truly yours,

WM. H. LEIB, Professor of Music,
Now residing in St. Paul, Minn.

All persons wishing information in the above matter, or having anything to impart that may assist me, will please address

J. R. CLEVELAND, General Detective,
St. Paul, Minn.

CHARLEY ROSS
THE KIDNAPPED CHILD